TRIBAL PUJAS AND FESTIVALS IN TRIPURA

Priyabrata Bhattacharjee

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FOREWORD

In Tripura there are quite a number of Tribal Communities belonging to diverse ethnic and linguistic groups who have an indigenous traditional culture. The tribal rites, rituals, beliefs and practices along with the tribal festivals constitute a rich cultural heritage which has survived as an integral component of the Indian culture without sacrificing its indigenous tradition.

Our knowledge about the pu as and festivals of the tribal people of Tripura is still limited. An attempt has been made in the present monograph prepared by Shri Priyabrata Bhattacharjee, Curator in-charge to present a clear and comprehensive picture of the pujas and festivals of the tribal people of Tripura which meets the long felt demand.

This is a commendable effort of the author. It would surely be of considerable use to all those, who want to know about the pujas and festivals of the Tribal people of Tripura and would also help the future researchers on the subject.

We are thankful to Shri Priyabrata Bhattacharjee for having completed the study on the subject.

(S. SAILO)
Director,
Tribal Research Institute,
Govt. of Tripura.

Dated, Agartala,
The 16th September,94.

PREFACE

Through the centuries many of the tribal people of Tripura were obliged to succumb to the religious and ideological dominance of Brahmanism and Buddhism but they were not ready to reject their traditional Gods and Goddesses. In the priestly Brahmanical and Buddhist Pantheons, the tribal gods and goddesses were accepted and the traditional observances associated with them. A Hindu tribal or a Buddhist tribal is not a separate class of Hindu society or a Buddist society, there is no differences between a caste Hindu and a tribal Hindu and the same is applicable to tribal Buddhist also.

It is possible to find out various tribal elements in Brahmanism and Biddddhism .In Tripura fourteen tribal gods and goddesses have taken their places in our formal religion, more particularly at the time of the Kharchipuja, the fourteen deities are receiving offerings of the lakhs of non tribal populations.

Tribal pujas and festivals in Tripura deals with the religious pujas and festivals of the Hindu nad Buddhist tribals who were indeed indigenous to the land and they have managed to survive to this day by struggle. What gave strength to the Adivasis or Adimjaties in their grim struggle for existence ?

No doubt,it was their affinity to spirits, nature deities and ancestores. They had their own religious beliefs and customs and rites and ritual of pujas with animal sacrifice, wine and bamboo made pipe containing holy water. They had a priestly class called Achai or ochai or ojha along with the chief priest Chantai and a pantheon of nature deities, spirits and ancestors .

The culture of this state represents a Mini India having the product of fusion of two dominant cultures, one of the Hindu Buddhist culture, another of the indigenous tribal culture. Tribal pujas and festivals were producers of music

and song and dance and legends which are still maintaining their distinctive identities as integral part of Indian life, thought and art .

The tribals of the state of Tripura were generally poor and illiterate but not uneducated nor lacking in wisdom. With their knowledge and wisdom the tribals of Tripura sought to accomodate and integrate a great deal of their own culture as articulated through ritualistic folk songs and dances, agricultural rituals and ritualistic decorations around the bamboo poles , their emblems of deities which were shaped and formed by the raw bamboo poles. Their ritualistic songs, myths and legneds were transmitted orally from generation to generation , each generation changing them and adding to them with changing times and situations .In fact, the tribals of Tripura have own forms and asthetic standards .

I was never a student of anthropology and had no academic claim on the subject . At the outset I must say that I do not profess to have acquired any outstanding knowledge of the subject evean to-day ."Tribal pujas and festivals in Tripura "is a straight historical and objective narrative of the origin and evolution of what is callcad tribal traditional pujas and festivals along with the pujas and festivals which were borrowed from the Shastras of Hindus or Budhists .

I am not a professional social anthropologist , but I have tried to scientifically handle social anthropological materials. This book is llikely to reveal various flaws of anthropology in the expert's eye for which I leave it to them to evaluate my work and to give suggestions which would be accepted thankfully and acknowledged.

There may be a good number of important information that is missing in it . I confess that I have tried as far as practicable to give details regarding the pujas and festivals of majority tribes and subtribes , but a lot of tribes have

remained untouched due to lilmited scope
Inspite of my great care, there may be some unfavourable hints about some of the tribal's crude and antiquare customs and pujas for the scientific study, I, therefore, appologise .

In the preparation of this projects , I owe a deep debt of gratitude of my friend and inspiring brother Shri Debapriya DebBarman , and Shri S. Sailo, Director of Tripura state Tribal Cultural Research Institute and Museum, Govt .of Tripura who have given valuable suggestions . I also express my profound gratitude to late Capt.Nagendra Ch .Debbarman who has given opportunity to attend the Ker puja festival in the palace complex and to contact with the Chief priest Chantai for discussion about the tribal pujas and festivals in Tripura. I am really greatful to Shri Tak rai Chantai ,the chief priest of the temple of Chaturdasha-devata, Old Agartala,for his valuable description about the Kharchi puja and other rituals also.I thankful to Shri Bajuban Reang, Minister of Agariculture, Govt of Tripura, Shri Pradip Nath Bhattacharjee , Dr . Surajit Chakraborty ,Reader , Womens 'college,Shri Ratan Acharjee, Shri Ram Gopal Singha , Shri Niranjan Chakma , Shri Narayan Debnath , for their healthy cooperation and inspiration .

Last but not the least is the help from my wife Srimati Binapani Bhattacharjee whose unfailing co-operation helped me to write the manuscript . With her active co-operation it could not have been possible for me to sucessfully complete this work . I am particularly thankful to her .

Agartala,
December,1994..

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CHAPTER I

TRIPURA AND HER PEOPLE

Tripura, the land of fourteen Gods and Goddesses in the North Eastern India with its capital at Agartala is located between 20.56' and 24.32'north and 91.10' and 92.21'east and measures 10,477 square Kilometres. It is a small state with a population 20,53,058 of whom about 28.45% belong to the tribal communities.(1)

Tripura is bounded by the Sylhet district (Bangladesh) in the north , Cachar district in the north east, the Mizoram state in the east, the districts of Chittagong and Noakhali (Bangla desh) in the south and Comilla district (Bangladesh) in the West.

No less than nineteen tribal communities belonging to divers ethnic and linguistic groups are to be found widely distributed over different parts of the state.Out numbering the tribal people the plains people from indeterminable times have been lilving side by side with tribal communities , resulting in cultural exchanges.

The state of Tripura came to assume its name after the tribe called "TIPRA" that inhabited it and to which the Royal house of Tripura belong.Though difficult to establish such theory of the name of Tripura, of all the opinions on the origin of the name of the state , the present one suggested by K.C Singha seems to be quite suitable.(2)

The history of the Manikya dynasty begins with the king Mahamanikya who ascended the throne sometime in the middle of the 15th century A.D.(3).

During the British days Tripura was known as a Native state u nder Manikya dynasty which merged with India on 15th October, 1949 and it attained statehood on January 21,1972. Administratively, it has now 3(three) districts, namely North Tripura district, West Tripura district and South Tripura district with respective head-quarters at Kailashahar , Agartala and Udaipur . Tripura has six principal ranges of hills which run north to south parallal to one another with an approximate intervencing space of 19.31 K.M . The highest range of

Tripura is Jampai hill with an approximate height of 969,26 mitres. Besides, Sakhantang ,Langtorai , Aattara-mura, Bara-muara, Sardaing , Beatling Sib , Peng puf and Jarimura are included as the high ranges. Tripura has nine important rivers and a good number of chharas . The names of the rivers are Juri , Manu , Dhalai , Khowai , Gomati , Haora,Muhuri , Burigang , Deo , Fenny , Langai and Bijoy which are nevigable by boat of about 2ton during the rainy season only

The land of Tripura seems to have risen from the sea bed before fourty milion years age (4)
The surface of the land is mountainous and uneven . The hills are formed of dull reddish colour . All through the plains and valleys the alluvial soil is to be found . The soil in the state of Tripura may be classified as :(a)Ethel , (b)Methel , (C)Doyans (d)Bele(e) Kankar (f)Vastumati . It appears that the big and long hard rocks are hardly available . The sand stone of very bad quality and shingles are to be traced in the course of river bed .
In regard to flora and fauna , they are in close similarity to those of the Chittagong hills tract and the hills of Assam . The plains of westernal border of the state also bear a close resemblance to the plains of Bangladesh . The Tripura tract is characterized by the wonderful cultivation of tea , bamboo, brakes and rubber which grow in plenty . Besides these most of the country is suitable for plantation of paddy,jute , tobacoo , pumkin , sugarcane, mustard , sweet patato , ginger, and castor . The shimul, jackfruit, sajina ,babla , palasha , shal ,segun , gorjan and rata etc. are the largely grown trees . More-over, pine-apple and lechu abound the state of Tripura .
Wild animals are to be found in the state. Even in the present century , the tigers and the elephants and gayal are reportedly numerous .Other animals consist of buffalo , wild boar , leopard , deer , monkey , bison etc.
Tripura is, nodoubt a melting pot of ethnic diversity . Even though the tribals have so many groups , they seem to have similar ethnological characteristics . It is generally believed that the original inhabitants of the state belong to the Mongoloid stock migrated from north eastern region . Acco-

rding to the curent official list the tribes that occupy it are tipras (Tripuri), Jamatias, Noatias, Riangs , Halams, Chakmas, Maghs, Garos, Mundas, Lushai, Oraon, santal,Uchai, Khasis, Bhils, Lepchas, Bhutias and Chaimals. Of these tribes the Tipras constitute the most numerous sections with the Riangs comming next ,These two tribal communities in fact , comprise the earliest inhabitants of Tripura , other are supposed to be the later migrants . However , Subsequently, the bengalees from the plains belonging mostly to different Brahmanical sects started taking refuge in the hilly region of Tripura . This movement of plains people became more and more intense after the partition of the country in 1947.It may be mentioned here that a few followers of Islam had also migrated into the state and get themselves established .

The Tipras are the largest tribe belonging to Bodo group of Indo-Mongoloid or Kirata origin .(5). They constitute 55.57%of the total Scheduled tribe population of the state according to 1971 census report . It has been observed that the Tipras are divided into two groups namely the puran Tipras and the Deshi Tipras . The Deshi Tipras seem to have originated as a result of admixture between the Bengalees and the Tipras.(6).

Among the tribal of Tripura the Tipras belong to Hinduism (99.95% according to 1961 census report).

Ethnologically,the Jamatias and Tipras belong to one and undivided group. The Jamatias belong to the Bado branch of the Tibeto- Burman language group .(7). It is to be noted that the Jamatias belong to Hinduism (1961 census report). According to the census report of 1981, the total population of the Jamatias in Tripura is 44554. The Noatias are of Tibeto-Burman stock having marked mongoloid feature The Noatias are believed to be a mixed tribe.(8). They are supposed to be mixed with Tipras and Jamatias .They are divided into various sections like Murasing,Keoya,Khalicha ect . (9). The total Noatia population as per 1971 census is 10297 which is 2.28% of the total tribal population . The Noatias are Hindu by religion . The Riangs are the second largest tribe in Tripura . Both linguistically and ethnically the Riang are akin to the Tibeto -Burman tribes of North east India .(10). They originaly came from Burma and entered

Tripura through Chittagong hill tracts.The Riang Population as per 1971 census is 64722 which is 14.36% of the total tribal population , Majority of the Riangs are Hindus(96.97%),while a growing majority are Christians .The Uchai are the tribes who belong to the Bodo group of Indo -Mongoloid origin as the Tipras .(11). There of opinion that incourse of migration from the Burma-Arakan regions towards the hill tracts of Chittangong and Tripura, the Riangs moved frist and the Uchai followed them . According to the 1971 census the Uchai population of Tripura is 1061. A good number of the Uchai are HIndus , while a growing populations are followers of Christ or Buddha .They are divided into 12 sections but Paiktama Kheyang and Jalai are only found . The kukis belong to the mongoloid racial stock . (12). The Cacharies call them Lushaais , while they are known as Darlong in Tripura . They have been lliving in Tripura from early times. Divided into several clans , they are the same race as the Lushais, Their language belong to the Austro-Asiatic group of Tibeto -Burman family.(13). The Kukis are the followers of Hinduism and Christianity. According to 1961 census report the Hindu population of the Kuki was 3185,while Christian population was 2345. The Halams have been living in Tripura from an indeterminable period who have remained on the upper hills in the eastern part of Tripura. They belong to the Indo-Mongoloid racial family and linguistically they are closely related to the Kuki sub-family and of the Sino-Tibetan family.(14). The Halam tribe consist of some sub-tribes , namely :(1)Kalais , (2)Rupinis (3)Keipeng , (4)Rangkhal , (5)Malsum, (6)Bangcher etc. The customs of the Halams are closely allied with those of the Tipras. Majority of the Halams are Hindu , but there are some converted Christians and Biddhists. According to the census 1971, the total population of Halams is 19076. The following table shows the religious distribution of the Halams .

Census report 1971

Religion	Number of population
Hinduism	18530

The Lushais appear to have migrated from the Lushai hills who ethnically belong to the Mongolian stock and they are speaker of the Kuki- Chin of the Tibeto-Burman language group.(15). At present the total Lushai population in Tripura is 3778 . Majority of the Lushais are Chiristians
According to Dr. R Sharma " Ethnically and linguistically ,the Maghs are affiliated to the Kukis ".(16). While Dr .Grierson says that the Maghs belong to the Indo- Chinese race. (17). Besides, H.H. Risley is of opinion that the Maghs have strong Mongoloid traits.(18). They migrated to Tripura from Arakan. The total Magh population as per 1971 census is 13273 which is 2.94% of the total tribal population . The Maghs are devoutly Buddhists .The Chakmas belong to mongoloid group of people and they are an offshoot of tsak or tsek tribe of Arakan, who migrataed to Tripura from the Chittagong hills tracts. (19). The Chakmas are divided into several groups such as Malima,Baduya,Boma Koda, Kurchya etc. The po plution of Chakma is 28622 and they constitute 3.36% of the total tribal population of the state . Buddhism appears to have always been their religion. The Khasis, Garos, Mundas, Orangs, Santals, Lepchas, Bhils, Bhutias and Chimals are non-indigenous communities who came to Tripura only a few generations ago .
All tribes maintain a close proximity of habitation to water sources such as rives, Chharas in order to facilitate religious performances . It has been found that the tribals are very poor and improvident . The majority of the tribes are dependent on agriculture, while a considerable portion has been emplo yed in the Government service.The natural resources of Tripura have influenced on the character and occupational habit of the tribal people . Abundant availability of bamboo and woods have helped them to make buskates , mats and various types of wood-work of artistic merit. Besides ,supply of textile materials have developed the art of weaving in am important manner. The principal languages of the indigenous tribal and non-tribal population are Bengali and Kakbarak. Nearly 84.20% of the tribal population of Tripura speak

Kakbarak which is a language of the Bodo-sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the Indo-Chinese linguistic family.

The tribal population of Tripura has a distinct and indepe ndent cultural existance over an extensive area by means of its nutural position and they are stil maintaining their indige nous tribal religious behaviour patterns along with so called higher relilgion. In the field of religion and culture they are conservative and try to preserve customs and beliefs which they inherited from their predecessors .

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CHAPTER - II

THE HISTORY OF TRIBAL RELIGIOUS CULTS

It is believed that " religion is commonly understood as a belief that mankind has in some invisble controlling power with a related emotion and a sense of morality.(1). The common features and nature of religious belief of the tribal religion are same as in the case of any so called Higher religion. It is true that in the field of the simplest beliefs and practices of tribal communities, the non-tribal virtuous people are not different from them. But yet, there are differences on pragmatic grounds "Which are not ligically valid."(2). At present it must be suffice to say that " in any treatment of tribal beliefs and practices, it would be useful to shed personal prejudices, or at least keep judgement in suspe nse."(3). On the basis of the worth saying of N.K. Bose, we should not pass any judgement on the history of the tribal religion in Tripura, and only mention some of its broader characteristices and historical changes to which tribal people have been subject in the end of 20th century A.D.

The most important universal feature of tribal faith in Tripura is that it ranges from the vaguest animism and supernatural worship to the deepest anthropomorphism. It is a fact that the rites and rituals of the tribal people vary from those of the stately temples of Agartala to those of the Tipras, the Riangs, the Noatias, the Jamatias, the Uchais, the Kalais, and the Rupinis who worship their indigeneous pre-Hindu fourteen Gods and Goddesses with conventional tribal rites and beliefs and practices. But is should be remembered that the form of worship springs from true love, therefore, we find no differences in the field of tribal religion from the Brahmanical faith.

However, besides pujas to the Brahmanical Gods and Goddesses in their day to day life there are countless gods and goddesses belonged to animism along with rituals of all kinds in which sacred natural objects representing them are adored. The most of the tribal peoples of Tripura are Hinduized or Buddhaized or Christianized but many of them seem to be

people living inaccessible regions of forests, hills and hill slopes have their own Ochais only and the pujas as well as all religious ceremonies are performed by them following the traditional tribal beliefs and practices.

The tribal people participate in some of the ceremonies of their Hindu neighbours. In Tripura, it is to be observed that all tribal communities are described as animist according to the census report during British period. A.E. porter tried to show in the census report of 1931 that the term 'animist' previously used to describe the religion of tribal peoples may be replaced by the vaguer, but more satisfactory term " tribal religion".(6). He thought that " the connotation of the word animist is too specific and that a term is more satisfactor which morely indicate adherence to a system of beliefs and prctices considered to be characteristic of the tribe without at the same time conveying and suggestion as to their nature."(7).

In this connection it may be mentioned here that the previous census reports of 1891,1911 and 1921 have already informed that the tribal people are in the fold of Hinduism and it is not a possible task to separate Hindus from animist. In case of Tripura, Hinduism takes a different shape where we find that animism is deeply influenced by the " Sanatana Dharma". The Hinduism practised by the tribals of Tripura is a curious mixture of the Hinduism because the old tribal gods and goddesses have not yet been out-stead by them and the tribal gods and goddesses are worshipped side by side with those of the Hindus by the tribal Ochais or Chantai. Obviously, all the tribal people except the followers of Christ and Buddha may be called Hindus in a wider sense. Significantly, the tribal people have identified themselves as Hindus, and a good number of those peoples do not feel any necessity for Brahmin priests to perform religious ceremonies for them in time of birth, marriage and death. Indian culture finds no objection to this, and no Hindu takes any objection to their self identification as Hindus. The observations made by N.K. Bose are applicable here. He says that the tribal peoples have their indigenous priests and ceremonies," even if such peoples call themselves Hindu, no other Hindu objects, for Hinduism is spread over a wide spectrum encompassing tribal

beliefs at one end and the highest forms of philosophical freedom at the other. Hindu society has moreover a built in arrangement, the cast system, by means of which communities can preserve their distinctive identities, even when they are federated in common hierarchical system. The change that takes place under the influence of christianity or Islam, both riligion of semetic origin, is however of a different order. For a man can not become a christian or Muslim merely if he claims to be one."(8).

Apart from the tendency to absorb the practices of influential neighbours, the tribal peoples are also particularly subject to missonary and proselytising influence of Christianity. The Christian tribal peoples are fast giving up their old customs and adopting the western mode of life. Many of their present customs are mixture of their old customs and the western pattern of life. A good number of Khasis, Loshais and Kukis are said to embrace Christianity. Most of them are protestants, some of them are Catholics.

Many of the tribes of Tripura come more and more under influences of Hindu way of life, and their tribal cults were roughly assimilated to Hinduism by Brahmins who are said to be brought by the Royal house of Tripura. But Animism, the primitive form of religion, is still traceable in Tribals thinking and out-look among the Hindu and Buddhist tribes.

Now a new trend has been found among them in which respect for their own indigenous culture and their identity are the dominnent factors. Buddhism has undoubtedly brought the message of peace of love to the converts. The Moghs and Chakmas are Buddhists, but they 'bear a distinct Muslim influence in their social norms, conventions, language and in the system of nomenclature. On the other hand, in their rites concerning the deities they bear marked traces of Hinduism." (9).

ANIMISM:

It is not difficult in the present stage of our knowledge to say that the term animism is taken, in a wide sense "to denote the belief in the existence of spritual beings".(10). The halams extremely believe in the existence and activities of

soul in man, animals and plants."(11). In the Halams society soul in called Ratha, Dr. J.Gan Choudhury is of opinion that a soul is capable of leaving the body while a person is asleep ..... They believe in rebirth which is supposed to take place after seven days on the basis of Karma in previouus life. It is also believed that the soul immediately returns home after death in the form of either a kite or a dove."(12). The most of the Hindu Halams believe that high mountains, hills, trees and bamboos are the abodes of spirits or godlings. Similar belief is to be generally found among the Tipras, Noatias, Jamatias, Riangs, Kukis and Uchais. Sri Debapriya Deb Barman in his " Treaties on Traditional social institutions of the Tripura communities" has been described that the Tripuris call the soul of human body FALA. they believe that when a man falls asleep the soul goes from the body temporarily and returns into the body."(13). The belief in spirit is an important aspect of the religious life of Tipras." It is believed that on the " Charua-Bufang" (a kind of tree) the spirits ramain. The joining of the paths or the road crossing which they call 'Lampra' is supposed to be hunted by evil spirits. Some of them are in belief that very old pond in also an abode of the evil spirits. The dominating belief is that if a particular plot of land be an abode of evil spirits them it is very harmfull to cultivate the land.

Even more, some of the hills and big trees are indicative to them as the dwelling of the evil spirits."(14).

The Riangs believe in soul and its separate existence.Like the Tipras, they also call it "FALA". So far as soul is concerned in the Riang society, it has been found that "to the Riangs sleep implies temporary departure of soul and death means permanent departure"(15).

In case of the Jamatias, Animism is a unique factor.They worship the supernatural spirits and forces,although they succumb to Hinduism,but the essence of animism is one of the characteristic feature of their religion like the Tipras,Riangs and others. The spirit of God or Godling or deity is indicated by the word'Matai" and according to the Anthropological point of view, all their primitive deities are nothing, but the nature deities and spirits only.Animism prevails also

among the Uchais and they adore the evil forces of nature. The Mundas prefer to call themselves Hindu while they retain the cult of their tribal deities.Animism plays an important part in their religious life.The Chakmas, Moghs,Khasis,Garos,Oraons,Mundas,Kukis and so on belong to Hinduism or Buddaism, but the traces of animism are still remarkable in their religions.The Khasis think that every natural object or Phenomenon is govern by the spirits.(16). Besides the Khasis and the Garos believe that the soul after death takes the form of a ghost or insect and beast.They worship the natural forces as the deities.The high spirit of the Garos is Tatara-Rabugh.(17). In this connection it may be mentioned here that the high spirit of the Khais is U-Beli-neng`Thaw.(18). The Kukis of the Tripura are said to have worship the deceased's soul. (19). The Kukis along with the Lushais believe that the good spirit is Pathien who created this universe and Huais are the powerful devil spirits.(20). Both the tribes believe that"after death the soul matter of the deceased keeps prowing around his mortal abode and Thang Chhua puja offered by surving relation can bring it repose. Other wise a restless spirit can do harm to living man."(21). Here in Tripura,the santals and Oraons have faith in animism. The mountain, Marang Buru is the chief God of Santals.(22) "Besides, the Santals also pay homage to Berha-pat, Mangar pat, Budha pat, Chandra pat, soulpat and Daursani as the hill -deities. The oraons are animist, like the other tribes they propitiate to the Dharani or Dharamesh as the supreme being.(23)

ANIMATISM:

The belief in animatism is found among the Tipras, Noatias ,Riangs, Jamatias, Kukis,Halams, Uchais, Oraons, Santals and others. According to animatism "the Halams hold in high esteem a pair of stone, eacah about 300 grams in weight which are preserved in a earthern pot filled in with paddy and are supposed to beget children .(24). Generally we find that the word"animatism"means the attribution of life, spirit or personality to physical objects.

The Riangs believe the natural objects, from the stone to the

mountain are said to have life in themselves. At the present stage of our knowledge,we come to know that the Riangs are supposed to think the luckyness of the certain stones and pabbles. It has been observed that "two of them (stones) are husband and wife and smaller ones their children.The stone--couple beget children near Banana tree or at the jhoom-field.This family of stones are kept with due honour and offering in a pair of earthen pots full of rice. Any big river and tributaries are supposed to be mother and sisters.The Riama and Sarma rivers are supposed to be lovers.(25). The Kukis generally believed that the mountain "LONGTHORAI" is a deity and they worship it.After paddy is hervested a puja is performed in which a new earthern vassel is filled with newly harvested rice and the eggs are placed on the rice . Then pabbles of Mainung-ma are placed (26) as the representative of the deity. The worship of stones or material objects was of special importance in the pre-animistic stage among the tribes of India. Here in Tripura , at the time of Jhum cultivation two banana plants are posted, by the kukis at the place where the jhum will be cultivated and seven pabbles are placed there.These holy pabbles are worshipped following the traditional beliefs and practices of the pre-animistic period.

Through the conturies , the Tipra community observed the "Randhak" (27). puja as a part of the Goria puja. The Randhak is a symbolic representation of the spirit who is responsible for the welfare of the house.Two earten pots are filled up with rice. After-wards some pai bles are placed upon the rice.The pots of the Randhak are carefully kept in the house for a year and it is believed that if the number of the pabbles increases, the welfare of the house is confirmed.Like the Tipras the Jamatias also have Randhak but they keep one earthen pot instead of two.(28). Among the Uchais,Noatias and Jamatias, the Randhak puja is a marked feature and the pabbles are used as the symbols of animatism.

TOTEMISM:

Totemism certainly assumes a peculiar ancient idea of the transmigration of soul. The real totem is some species of bird

or beast,reptile or fish or else some variety of plant"between which and himself the savage believes a certain intimate relation exists". It has been found that by a totem generally means any animal, Plant or animate object from which a tribe has descended.It is very significant that the clans are named after the totems. According to totemism a totem is a respected object for worship but it should not be a deity. The totemistic object may not be eaten or killed.

According to Abdus Sattar, the Tipras are totemic tribe no doubt and some of"them do not eat boalfish,tortoise and jackfruit and so on as their clans are named after these objects".(29). But I have not observed such thing in Tripura as yet. The totemism becomes quite clear when we come in contract with the Riangs of Tripura.In the conception of the Riangs BIHANGA (Garur bird) is the totem from which they have descended.

The opinion of some anthropologist is that the Riang"is a corruption of the Bihanga.So the Riangs believe that they should respect the Bihanga as the ancestor. Besides, the Riang society consist of several clans which are named after aninal, fish, musical instruments.Tiger,Tortoise, etc.for instance, the Apeto clans (fish) Chang-preng (guitor).Charkhi clans(wheel), Meska clan (tiger), Musa(leopard) and Tooima-ia-phauh(tortoise).(30).

It is accepted by the all that the "lowest levels upon which religion has taken definate form are totemism and fetishism".(31). Totemism was a primitive system both of religion and society in Tripura.The practice of totemism is not only confined to the Tipras and Riangs, but it has a good number of followers. The Uchais have clan system. These are:Paitakma, Kheyang, Jalai, Uyakchu, Uyareng, Chanprassi, Kaichhani, Takma, Juyamukh,Yafha, Jali koichak,Jalai kasam and Sikam Painagi."(32).

From the above mentioned class-list, it is found that the hen,boar,tortoise,frog etc.are the totem of the Uchais.The Oraons have clan-system.The names of the clans are thus:Tirki(kujram tree); Ihhu(tortoise);Kirpota(figling); Latkar(meat of tiger); Kujram(kujram tree); Ghedheir (kite cow and eel fish);Minzer (as khakhar); Kerketan (as mizer);Barar(as kerketan).(33).

It is clear that they named their clans after the totems. They believe that they owe their existence to the pleasure of the totems who provide necessities.

Totemic system also survives among the Santals,(34),Khasis,(35),Garos,(36),,Moghs,(37), and Chakmas.(38). The belief in totem is widely current through-out the tribal world of Tripura,but in the case of some tribes a difference is noticed.The difference lies in the root of their belief in totems.

The Santals have more than a hundred clans named after plants and animals or material objects.(39). In this connection, it may be cited that out of a list of eighteen vegetables totems among the Oraon,eight are tree totems named after the trees like Bar,Basa,Kinda,Putri etc.S.C.Roy is of opinion that they do not agree with the descent of men but from the totem.(40). The Oraons believe that the totemic plant or animal is believed to have helped or protected the humnan ancestors of the clan.The Oraons generally show reverence for their totems and do not destroy their totem-trees or are refrained from eating their fruits or flowers.

The santals also have a few of their clans named after plants like Aegle Marmalos(baltree) and Ficus bengalensis (banyan tree)and they believe in some kind of relationship with them.

SHAMANISM:

The priests or ochais have a significant role in the tribal societies.The Ochai is the priest of the tribal communities who is not distinguishable from the other man of the community so far as their behaviour is concerned.However , when the sacred occassisons come they become completely different from the others.The tribal peoples of Tripura in general, are quite aware of their shamanistic activities.

The Ochais are said to know the details about the good and bad spirits.These sacred specialists find out the cause of disease and then through their spells and pujas or sacrifices they drive away the spirits.In addition the above pujas, the Ochais may be taken to another sacred specialists who treat the ailing persons by providing herbs to them.Thus, the Ochai as we have noted above,is a diviner and a madicant.Here in

Tripura.The Riangs believed that "wrath of some malignent deities and spirits is the cause of disease and only though propitiation to the deities the patient can be cured."(41). The Riangs priest is called Aouchai who sacrifies a chiken or a pig for driving away the spirits.After wards,he cuts the stomach of chiken open and examinies its entrails and declears the result of his activities.Besides,"a worship to cure a minor illness is called Toadari puja, while a costly worship in case of serious disease is known a Dabikta puja."(42). It has been found that when a boy or any animal are attacked by the disease,the deities like Buraha and Haicukma are worshipped by the Aouchai.

The influence of Shamanism over the people of Tripura seems to be very great.The tipras are completely under the influence of the priest Ochai who has a pivotal role in the society.Apart from the pujas and religious rites,the Ochai is also a medicine man.

Sri Debapriya Debbarman observes:

"At times he also plays the role of the village physician.In some cases, they call in the Ochai for the treatment of disease.After observing the diseased person, the Ochai comes to know why and how that man has fallen ill.If any evil spirit be responsible for the illness, the Ochai performed magical rites as a device of treatment. To drive away the spirit the Ochai some times blows over the patient with utterances of mantras which is said to be effective and creative for the elinment otherwise, for this purpose, the Ochai performs a worship.In this worship he sacrifies fowls,pegions,goats,etc.and utters mantras to remove the spirit.These mantras are different for diferent illness and the animals to be sacrificed in the worship also vary."

Besides, for various diseases the Ochai prescribes or applies folk medicine as a mode of treatment."(43). It is now clear that the life of Tipras is marked with a number of shamanistic beliefs. Shamanism is the highest common factor in the religious belief of the Kukis. Underlying the importance of Shamanism in the society of Kukis, we like to say that for the treatment of illness the Thiampu (ojha) generally worship benevolent God pathien.(44). In Tripura an interesting shamanistic belief prevails among the Kukis which is closely

associated with that of the Tipras. Thiampu covers the face of himself with a piece of white cloth ahd 'over piece of a burning charcoal which they call "Murik-Ai", Bero, i.e. incense is sprinkled. By smelling the incense smoke and reciting some magic spells Thaimpu will tell who will be appeared with what. Sometimes, Longthorai, Burahha and Dain etc. all evil spirits are to be appeared with a white cock, a black cock, a white goat, a black goat etc. Then, according to the result of the test, Thaimpu worships pathien to ward off the spirit and makes the patient cured. It is their belief that Lushari is the Supreme God on Heaven and if pathien fails to cure any patient by appeasing the evil spirits appeal is made to Lushari by the Thaimpu to make the patient cured.(45). The Uchais of Tripura like the Kukis and other tribes believe that the Ochai cures the patient from illness following the Shamanistic belief traditionally.

The Jamatias have priest who are called Achay. He conducts the pujas and plays the role of a shaman. As a shaman he first finds the cause of the disease then he performs the kuway chanayma puja, the Burasa puja and the Bwrwrog puja if he thinks it necessary for a diseased person to be freed from the influence of the evil eyes of the respective deities.(46). It has been found even to day that the Jamatias gives much more importance to the Achay than to the hospital for the recovery of the patient. The Achay, in general, applies pujas, mantras and last of all indigenous medicines for the recovery of the patient. The kalais believe that the Ochai is a medicine man who cures the patient from the illness.(47). Like the Kalais, the Noatias, have shamanistic belief and they engage the Ochai to cure the patient from the sufferings. The Oraons have some ojhas or shaman in their society. In treating their illness the oraons rely on the ojhas and they receive good result from them. The ojhas performs a certain puja, spell some mantras and last of all applies indigenous medicine made of herbs. Significantly, the ojhas, by exercising a charm succeed in drawing the snake when some one is bitten by it.

Abdus Satter Observe :

"The snake comes orawlling through and start wallowing at his feet in a token of utmost submission. Ojha orders, 'go'. Instantaneously the snake puts its mouth to the wound and starts sucking the poison over a cup full of milk and falls dead. By then the patient has already started regaining conciousness.(48). The role of shaman seems to have its influence upon the khasis, Santals, Mundas, Garos, Chakmas, Moghs, Lushais and even in the non-tribal communities of Tripura also.

Lyngdoh or Langdoh, the priest of Khasis not only conducts the worship but also performes the duties of a medicine man or shaman. Jenkins says." such is the belief of the people in the evil spirits that they are completely under the influence of the priests and spend large amount of money in order to secure their favour.(49).

MAGIC:

Magic is based on a fundamental belief in the supernatural spirits who can do good or evil to human. In course of time these forces of nature identified with the deities or Gods. It is widely known fact that almost all the tribal people in Tripura largely believe in 'Black -Magic' as well as ' White--magic' P.K. Bhowmick observes, the Black magic is considered antisocial in nature. Black magicians generally do harm to the individuals and are believed to have inherent potency for doing evil to others."(50). According to J.G. Frazer magic is a mistaker application of principles of association which properly employed, lead to science. Whenever sympathetic magic occurs in its pure, unadulterated , form , it assumes that in nature one over follows another necessarily and invariably without the intervantion of any spirittual or personal agency."(51). Magic appears as a combination of ritual, act and spoken spell which are secretly practiced.

In Tripura, like the other tribes of North -East India, religion along with magic seem to be man's response to meet in conceivable eventualities of life. Magic is related with each and every religions of the Universe. In case of Tripura, Magic

is interpreted in general term by the tribals of Tripura as they have ability to produce miraculous results with the aid of certain spirits who are controlled for such propose. They believe that the principle behind religion and magic both is same, the appeasement of the Supernatural force to get desired results. Mr. Raghuvir Singha has sought to prove that 'in religion these sacrifices always consists of fowls or cattle, like mithun, but in magic the object is depicted in figure prominently. The Magico- religious complex thus does not warrant any high principles of ethical behaviour. It is simply based on general laws of nature which are ultimately interpreted according to practical situation.(52).

As we have said before, magic may be divided into two groups imitative and contagious. It has been examined by the anthropologist that imitative magic generally based on the law of similarity, while contagious magic is based on the doctrines of contract 'things which were once in contact with the person to be affected, if charged with some charms, become potent enough to harm or help the person targetted.''(53).

The Ochais of the Tipra community practice both kind of magic. They perform some magical rites to ward off evil spirits which cause harm the people of community and they gain suitable results. In the Tipra community magic is also applied to protect the growing crop in the fields. Besides, to cure disease megical rite is performed. The purpose of magic is to over come the unseen power. They have firm belief that if a person casts any look on the fruit bearing plant or growing crops the result becomes terrible and if the look casts on a child the effects is very serious because the child is fallen ill. The Ochai is called in these occassions and he defeats the malafide force and the child gets rid of disease. Therefore, magic is latent in the rites and rituals of the Tipras. Believing in the magic the Tipras 'suspend an earthen pot with some symbolic signs on it over the main door. The pot is first sanctified with mantras by the Ochai. It is done with a view to keep away the evil spirits or to protect them from the evil sign of the spirit.''(54).

" For protection of the household in many occassions they prefer to drive a sentified nail with mantras by the Ochai in each of the four corners of the house.(55). The Tipras have

firm belief in magic that the man or woman who possesses this craft can kill man, animal and trees by the magicalspell. Sri Debapriya Debbarman describes an interesting episode of the power of mantra, he says, " the man who possesses this craft is able to put a piece of meat into the stomach of another man. According to them the santtified piece of meat after entering into stomach begins to enlarge day by day. Thereafter, the pain begins in the stomach and the man dies some day. It is noticed that the santified piece of meat spreads roots in the stomach and even after death if the belly of the dead is cut open the existence of the piece of meat is found."(56). On such occassions, the Tipras engage the Ochai who performs the magical treatment. By the strength of magic the Ochai pulls the piece of the meat from the diseased person and exposes the same.

Obviously, the tipras have outgrowing the magical beliefs to day with modern system of Educations. But a section of peoples (old men) believe that some female of the society specialise in exorcism who uses a magic and can convert herself in to other form like, tree, animal and bird etc. She is called dain or witch or Chhakal in Kakbark. The chhakal practices witch-craf at dead of night and does harm to the crops or plants or man." Whenever a man suffers from severe disease or dies suddenly, then it is believed that the harm is done by the chhakal."(57). The Riangs believe magic and they use the amulets to wardoff the evil spirits. Belief in magic is evident in the various occassions, such as to cure disease, befriend a person, cause divonce or to unite a pair.(58). The magician or Ochai can couse illness and sometimes bring death to some persons. It is said that the Ochai is engaged to cause enemy's death. The stool, hair, nail, urine and corner of cloth are given by the villagers to the Ochai for the performance of black magic.

The belief of the Riangs in magic is originated by the religion. They have also belief in witches who are capable of sucking human blood. Magic has a definate place in the Halam community. The Ojha who conducts the pujas also performs magic. " The magician throws magically potent arrows on a tree, the idea being that just as the tree suffers so the enemy, and that with the gredual decay of the tree the enemy's health

deteriorates and he dies ultimately. Besides, nail-pairings, hair, a corner of enemy's cloth, urine, stool etc. are secretly collected to injure an enemy. It is believe that a magician can invisibly penetrate into the enemy's belly a sharp bamboo spilit or long thorn which will cause his death."(59).

Similar belief in magic exists among the Jamatias, Uchai, Noatias and Kukis. The Chakmas and Moghs have also belief in magic. The purpose of magic to them is to over come the malafide force because of which they can fulfill their wishes. The Chakamas observe magical rites to invoke rain. It is found that they give in marriage the frogs in the belief that rain must fall. It is thus interesting how the tribal folk have accepted themselves in many different ways of belief in magic.(60).

In time of drought the Oraons perform rain invoking ceremony.(61). According to Abdus satter, "there is an infinite variety of magic oriented rituals the Santals may observe. Whether they desire rain or prevention of epidemic or a child for a childness woman, better hervest, protection from an enemy and all kind of woes and miseries there are remedial rituals."(62). The influence of magic also prevails in the khasis society. The khasi-priest Lyndah observes magical rites and prectices witch-craft to exercise the evil spirits seizing upon a man or a woman. The Garos believe in Magic and they perform the magical rites." to reap good hervast during lean days, to defeat an advancing enemy and to serve other motives for sacurity of their lives."(63).

FERTILITY CULT:

It has already been noted that the Tribal communities perform some rites to promote fertility of crops, domestic animals and woman beings. The Oraons celebrate the marriage of mother earth so that the soil may become more fertile and productive in the Hari-Ari puja.(64). This is a form of fertility cult. The Chakmas believed that 'Basumati' or 'Parameswari' or nature being the wife of param-purush or father heaven. The 'Chungulang and Parameswari' pujas are observed at a time for getting a child, marriage or increasing harvest or for any other growth. The khasis regard ' Ambubachi' with great fanfare. They believe that mother Earth or 'Khamakkhya'

discharges the menses during three days. The khasis celebrate 'Ambubachi' so that soil of mother Earth may become more fertile and productive. Besides, the khasis, the belief in fertility cult is shared by the Garos also.

According to the anthropologist,it has been cleared that both animal and plant fertility is a concern of tribal religion and rites of fertility and procreation are found in the vedic ritualistic treatises called Brahmans.But the conception of fertility cult was originated during the pre-vedic period, mother Goddesses were always associated with the agriculture and land.Let us take an example of the Tipras,they believe that life was created from water, so they pay homage to mother Goddess of water'Tuima' sacrificing the animal like goats,chiken,etc.Mailooma and Khulooma are the Goddesses of fertility who are said to increase harvest and to save it from destruction.The Mailooma puja and the Khulooma puja of the Tipras are similar to the Mainokhma and the Khunokhma puja of the Riangs respectively. These two Goddesses are worshipped for a good crop of rice and cotton.The Garia puja is also related to fertility cult.Singing,dancing and oral jokes go with this puja where some erotic elements are traceable.Besides the Tipras, the Garia puja is shared by the Jamatias, Noatias and Uchais and other tribes of Tripura.Believing the fertility cult,the Halams generally sacrifies chiken and pig in the granary for an increase in crops which is called "Saarthada".(65)

The serring Artha of the Halams,Maylwngma of Jamatias,"Randhak"of the Lushais, Wangla of Garos have the same purpose.That from very early times egg symbolies fertility and sex which is why the tribal of Tripura sacrifice eggs to their Gods and Goddesses.To the tribal community egg can influence maternity,crops and increases livestock.Vermillion,Kalasa with full of water,blood of human beings and animal are symbols that naturally lend to fertility motif."It was originally believed that these added to the fertility of the Earth and that of the woman,and these are connected." (66) The Bishu festival of the Tipras,Riangs, Uchais, Kalais, Noatias and the Bijhu festival of the Chamas are festivals of fertility.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP:

The Oraon's life is marked with the worship of ancestor.One of the manifestations of animism is faith in ancestor worship.In this connection it may be noted that the tribals belief in ancestor is worldwide.So,the ancestor worship is naturally prevalent among the Santals.The Khasi is interested in the ancestor worship and the stone lifting ceremony is closely attached.It is their custom to meke offerings of food upon the flat stones to the spirits of the ancestors.(67). "The Goros fear the return of the spirits of the dead in ghost form,but they look to their reincarnation after a period of penance".(68). The Tipras respect their ancestors and the rituals related with the death of a human body and rites are observed by them.After removing the dead body from the house a cock is sacrificed at the feet of the dead body. It is their custom that the cock and some cooked rice are then offered to the dead.(69). In honour of the departed,cooked rice and curry of seven items are offered in the evening.The food and a piece of new cloth are offered before the sunrise for consecutive three days.On the fourth day "Maithaka" is followed in which cooked rice and curry also are offered. On the thirteen day the Tipras now a days perform "Shraddha" and Maikhalai ceremony, the offerings of food and drink to the departed soul.(70). Similar belief also prevails among the Riangs and they sacrifies a cock at the feet of the diseased person and cooked rice is offered alone with that of cock.Besides,cooked rice,eggs,paddy,water etc.are also offered after the cremation is over.On that day,in the evening rice, wine and water are given to the departed soul and such kind of offerings are also sacrificed for consecutive three days in the morning.(71). On the seventh day on a newly constructed small platform cooked rice and curry are offered alongwith tools,utensils and various seeds of Jhum crops that will be required in the next life.(72). "Some of them perfrom sarddha ceremony on the seventh day or thirteenth day.Kathainaini is an "annual ritual connected with the respectful and Wel-wishing offerings to the moan."(73). Besides, the Loklaimi and the Nakkathar are also interesting ceremonies of the ancestors worships.(74). The Halams observed a

certain rite after the death of a person, but there is no fix period for such obsequial rite.(75). Rice,cloth and wine are offered to the departed soul. Among the Khasis similar rites and practices are found.

According to the description given by Shyamlal Deb-Barma(76). it has been come to notice that there is no hard and fast rule of the ancestor worship of the Uchais.The Uchais observe Sraddha according to their own wishes.The ancestor worship of the Noatias is remarkable.On the forth day after cremation,food consisting of rice-bear and curry is offered to the departed soul.Like the Tipras on the thirteen day absequial rites are performed by the Noatias according to capacity of the dependants.(77).

Just before the cremation, the Jamatias offer cooked rice to the diseased person with curry of fish, egg or meat of pigeon.(78). They worship the bone of the cremated body daily till the Sraddha ceremony is held.Some of them observe Sraddha on the thirteenth day.

In Tripura, it is found that the Kukis offer food and drinks in front of the dead body because they believe that an offertory of flesh and wine is needed the dead person who have to walk a long in the another world.(79). The Moghs have the ancestor worship where the priest offers food and drinks to the dead body before it is taken to the burning place.After seven days some rituals are observed by the priest for the good of the departed soul.(80).

Analogous to the Moghs the Chakmas also dedicate a dish of rice to the dead after funeral bath.(81). The most important ancestor worship of Chakmas is called Vadya puja.Abdus Satter observes, "Vadya puja means serving rice to the soul of their ancestors.This offering is made on a wide patch of earth in the dense part of the forest.The family which arranges the Vadya puja counts the souls of its ancestors up to the third or fifty remove and places a dish of rice and also sweets for each.The dish of rice is kept on make-believe-pyres which are laid up for the soul.The relations of the souls in this side of existence have to remain pressent where the Vadya puja is being offered.(82).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ISS - In the sylvan shadows.
TCBD - Tribal culture in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER -III

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES OF TRIPURA

The analysis of the primitive religion presents the facts that the myriads of pujas seek to assimilate a small quantum of the powers possessed by the invisible beings. Faith in the existence of the Superior being and an aspiration to forge closer link with them are fundamental to all primitive religion".(1). R.R. Marrett is of opinion that " Being thus the sole source of his confidence, his custom, so far his imagination plays about ti, becomes his luck .... any and every custom is regarded as lucky is a religious rite."(2).

Similar views are made by Pallab Sengupta, he says that the superior being is in the object of nature which has originated the idea of deity from the brain of primitive peoples. They have imagined the nature deity as a human who feels hungry, drinks water, falls in love, becomes crude and possesses sextual life also.(3). Thus the puja began and became the central point of religious activities. The puja consist of welcoming the Gods as a distinguished gust, washing the feet of God, dressing him, adorning him, feeding him and giving necessary utensils accompanied by music and song: these are the most essential features of the pujas. Therefore, prayer, ritual and sacrifice are all means to turn evil influence in benevolence. Devid Hume in his " The Natural History of Religion" pointed out that the primary religion of mankind aries chiefly from an anxious fear of future events and what ideas will naturally be entertained of invisible unknown power, while men lie under dismal apprehension of any kind, may easily be conceived."(4).

It is scarcely necessary to indicate that Hinduism includes certain elements typical of a popular cult, worship of nature, of spirit and of ancestors. Magic, too, is widely practiced along with fertality cult. In course of time the primitive worship of the deities is modified by the Hindus scriptures (Sastras or Smrities) as the result of the dyanamic religious history of Hinduism.

The so-called lower casts of Hindu society are still following the traditional promitive religion along with rites. rituals , beliefs and practices because a good number of Hindus were previously tribal peoples, no doubt.(5).

There are some considerable tribal elements in the modern tribal religion and Hinduism, but one may not find the actual form of tribal religion now-a -days because there is no authentic archaeological remains in India to find out it.

However, before we come to out point about the discusssion of pujas and festivals of the Tipras, a short drescription on the features of tribal pujas may be helpful.

The human sacrifice and animal sacrifice were most essential features of the tribal religion. No doubt,(6). from the view point of the tribal pujas it is clear that the puja may not be performed with out animal ascrifice or human sacrifice. F.A. Gait, says, " Human sacrifices were also formerly offered by the Tipperas, Kacharis, Koches, Jamatias and other Assam tribes.(7). The tribal, generally, respects on Supernatural supreme God with his consort who are said to control the other nature deities. The Earth, the Sky and the Mountain are the nature deities. Below the rank of nature deities, there are deities who are supposed to lower Supernatural powers. The spirits are called less important deities who are mostly associated with some diseases, agriculture, animal, child, death and so on. It should be noted that all of them are propitiated by way of animal sacrifice. The pujas are strictly performed by the tribal priests who are traditionaly following the dogmatic rites and rituals. Names of the some God and Goddesses are changed from place to place and even community to community.

All Gods and Goddesses are not malevolent, some of them are benevolent. As far as the tribal puja is concerned, it has been found that the worship is not taken place in the temple generally. Perhaps, for the majority pujas, the open places are selected, such as under the tree, near the river, crossing of the roads and any solitary forest out side the village. The pujas are not performed to any concreat and figurative God made out of earth, wood, cloth, stone and matel. On the other hand, the bamboo poles, along with leaves are used to construct the imaginary abstract symbol of deity or God. It

has been found that a plain stone is receiving the offering from the devotees. Once upon a time, the non-Aryan elements or tribal elements in Hinduism were looked down as the superstitions. Recently , we are fourtunate enough to find that the idea of superstitions have been totally changed. The influence of pre-vedic elements on Hinduism is already accepted for its importance. The puja is a pre-vedic factor itself which was originally developed among the primitive tribal peopies of India.(8).

PUJAS OF THE TIPRAS

As yet, the traditional religious life of the Tipras differs with cast Hindu in case of some religious pujas and forms of worship. That from very early times animism flourished in Tripura. Now the Tipras belong to Hinduism, it is a fact that some obscurantist beliefs and practices existing among them but they are not to be called spiritists or animist as far as their pujas are concerned. They worship the Supernatural powers, nature deities, ancestors and spirits who are associated with the ceremonial worship in their day to day life. The pantheon of the tribal deities in the Tipra community is innumeral. The pujas of the Tipra society are basically worship of nature deities and nature's variour attributes represented by the numerous Gods, Goddesses and spirits along with ancestors.

LAMPRA OWATHAP PUJA

The religious activities of the Tipras begin with the Lampra puja. The worship of Akhatra and Bikhitra jointly called as "Lamprapuja".

These deities are known as the sons of the Supernatural supreme God in the pantheon of Tipra deities. In the Kakbrak "lam" means road, "pra" means branch and " owathap" means bamboo clump. It is believed that the abode of the deities are in the bamboo plants where two roads are merged. The Supernatural powers i,e, the sea and the sky are worshipped as Akhatra and Bikhitra respectively. It is good to remind ourselves that the sea and the sky seem to be man

Gods who drive away the evil spirits from the path of any auspicious work.

To make the structure of the deities, two pairs of bamboo poles measureing 61cm in height are planted in the ground on the courtyard. Afterwards, two other bamboo poles are tied to these planted bamboo poles horizontally. It appears that the bamboo poles are the sumbolic representations of the deities. E.T.Dalton holds the same view, he remarks, " a trace of their old faith is to be found in their present religious festival and worshipping it."(9). Anthropologicaly we may call it animistic representation of the deities which is a characteristic manifestation of animistic belief of the Tipras even today and these bamboo poles fully prove in the presence of the worship of Supernatural deities and spirits among the Tipras. In any case, we have no ground to believe the idea of full standing image prevailing among the Tipras during ancient period. The real fact is that the bamboo itself is worshipped in its natural form and the deities of Tripras are not personified and endowed with human shape. As the object of ritual the bamboo made "Owathap" is needed in every pujas of the Tipras after some addition or alteration regarding sizes and decorative works around the bamboo poles in times of making it.

Similar to the Tipras "the Garos and Kacharis sacrifice before a bamboo planted in the ground. The Bihors worship their godling 'Darha' in the form of a split bamboo, Mraris make the pair at marriage nodk round a bamboo in a bamboo shed and the ascetic Sanyasi should carry a bamboo staff with knots."(10).

The bamboo worship was not only earliest form of divine ritual, but it was existing long before the creation of temple and images of the Gods and Goddesses. But one should notice that only green-bamboo is regarded as sacred. The dry one is deprived of all its sacred nature.

Even the Turi tribe of Gujrat place two small pieces of bamboo in the room of confinement, so that no melicious spirits can have its influence on the new born baby."(11). The green bamboo is the 'Vastu Devata' or the God of residential house of the Bengalees. The pujas of Vastu Devata is observed on the pous Sankranti day. On the Occasion of

the Vastu puja it is found that 'a slender bamboo pole, with branches and leaves, is placed and purified by cowdung on the previous day. Decorations by rice powder, turmeric powder etc are made on the ground around the pole. The article needed for the worship are made of fruits, unboiled milk etc.(12).

However, let us come to our point, The Tipras have the priest who is called Ochai. The Ochai always conducts the 'Lampra' puja and the symbolic bamboo made Owathap is also constructed by him. Borua is the name of the helper who assists the Ochai in times of puja.(13). The ingredients of this puja consist of banana leaves, fowls or pigeon, eggs, rice, earthen pots, cotton, richha and wine. When every thing in order, the Ochai kneels on the ground and starts the puja. Chanting the Mantras the Ochai begins the puja by sprinkling water from the bamboo pipe or a jhari (a sacred pot made of brass). Afterwards, two fowls or pigeions are sacrificed and their blood is dedicated to the deities on the undried rice which are kept on the banana leaf in front of the Owathap. Sri Debapriya Bebbarman came in contact with the Lampra Owathap worship which is held at the bride house on the wedding day. He observes 'During this puja the Ochai chants mantras.

"Hengnai dengnai nachiri chiri chiri adung, balae Akhata bala Bikhata tuituibu elakhkhiraja dung balae nusa kamalapati nasu Jaduram, hamaychai tangnai tuibuk laktai aiugalagay, tangmani aiugamana tangthum langnay."

"The inner meaning of the mantras is as follows. Let the couple Jaduram and Kamala pati be laborious and happy in their married life. Let their life be as long as a river and unaffected by any-thing like an undecaying stone."(14).

However, the Ochai offers the the heads of the sacrificed fowls or pigeons along with the entrails to the deities and some quantity of wine is also offered. The heavy knife is washed and placed in front of the Owathap. It is interesting to observe that the Ochai touches the heavy knife with his right hand and the same time he touches his right ear when the spelling of mantras is continuing. This type of activities is performed thrice continuously. Regarding animal sacrifice a certain thing is to be remembered. The Ochai does not

completely sever the neck of the fowl or pigeon. Cutting the half portion of the neck of the fowl or pigeon the Ochai offers the blood to the deities. After wards, the fowl or pigeon is completely beheaded. As soon as the sacrifice is over the Ochai sprinkles water and wine over the heads of the fowls or pigeons. It is a fact that in case of leaser deities, the neck of the sacrificed animal is half cut like the Muslime Zabeh or formalised slaughter. But in case of higher deities, the neck of the animal has to be completely servered.

The Ochai can forecast the puja if it is performed rightly or not.He takes two jack fruit leaves in his hand and tosses them in the air in front of the Owathap.If one of them falls flat on the ground, another fall back on the ground, it is a good sign.Thus from the reading of the jack fruit leaves the Ochai declears that the deities have been pleased with the devotees and they will do good to the families .If the reading is auspicious the Ochai will order the devotee to sacrifice two fowls in the name of the deities so that they may be pleased.

MAILOOMA AND KHOLOOMA PUJA:

Observing by their religious beliefs,the Tipras have to be said the worshipper of natural forces as the Gods and Goddesses like the other tribal communities of the North East India.The earth is the mother Goddess through out the primitive world.She is the giver of blessing for increasing the productivity of paddy and crops.The Goddesses Milooma commonly is known as the Godess of paddy but anthropologically she is the mother Goddess "Earth" no doubt.The deity Kholooma is the mother Goddess mixed with the earth who is worshipped for abundant supply of cotton crops.These two deities are extremely related with the fertility cult.In most of the cases the deity Mailooma and Kholooma are paid reverence jointly.

The symbolic representation of these deities is different from the others in shape,material and character.The bamboo made Owathap or any bamboo structure is not generally needed.It

has been found that two earthen pots are filled with Jhum rice and tied with hand made cotton while a few egg shaped pabbles with vermillion dots are placed on the pots.These symbols are worshipped as the representatives of the goddess Mailooma and Kholooma in the house on various occasio ns.Two banana leaves are placed in front of the symbols which contain some undried rice.Like the Lampra puja the Ochai chants the mantras and sprinkles the water.The neck ofthe fowls are half cut by the Ochai at the time of blood offering to the deities.Soon the neck of the sacrificed fowls are completely severed and the heads are dedicated to the deities placing them of the banana leaves.A bottle of wine is given to each of the deities for their satisfactiom.
Recently,it has been observed that "two boiled eggs, boiled meat of the two cocks and some rice are given to the concerned deities."(15). The Tipras propitiate the deities for the welfare of their house hold during the house inaugration, marriage cearemony, sowing in sravana, harvesting in poush and in times of "Navanna".

TUIMA AND SANGRAM PUJA:

The Goddess Tuima and the God Sangram are indentified with two major forces of nature; the water and the mountain control a sub-ordinate hierarchy of deities and spirits under them.The nature deity Tuima as a water Goddess performes her defined role and ensures her protection to her worshi ppers.Similar to Brahmanical Hinduism,there is a duality of God and Goddess(16). in the Pujas of Tipras and each of these god and goddess has a qualifing term of address of "ma" amd " fha" which means "mother" and "father" respectively,It is good to remind ourselves that the sea, the sky and the mountain seem to be the Gods and the earth, the water and the tree become the Goddess and so on.It appears from the discussion of several scholars that the Tipras have recognised Tuima as the consort of the deity Sangram.They are worshipped jointly in every occasions.
The Tuima puja is celebrated once a year in the state level under the supervision of a Govt.official from the office of the Devayatan.Govt. of Tripura.Agartala.The ceremony is

held on the river Howrah.Besides,the Tuima puja is also observed in the various festivals.The Gods and Goddesses of the Tipras have no concretised visual symbols of abstract concept or no ideas for each one of which there is Dhyana or mental vision.Therefore the abstract symbols of the nature deities are made with the help of the bamboo poles,bamboo leaves and cotton thread etc The bamboo made structure of a deity to some extent may be called an alter or a pedestal of the deity, but if we identify it as the abode of the deity"Matainakh",surely, this will also be justified.The traditional sumbols of the deities are made in a peculiar way instructed by the Ochai who has to follow the specific desings at the time of constructing the certain deity The number and shape of the bamboo poles vary from one structure to another.However, on the river four bamboo poles are planted the heads of which are rising on the surface of water in a small squarish areas, the four bamboo poles are tied together with the help of another four pieces of bamboo poles.In the middle of this structure a platform (Machang) is constructed.On the surface of the platfrom the symbols of Tuima and Sangram are made by the well decorated bamboo poles in the befitting manner.A banana leaf is placed in front of the symbolic representation of the deities on the platfrom.The ingredients of the puja consist of four ducks,four eggs and four naibedya containing undried rice, banana and sweets in a small earthen pot.Besides, the Tipras generally sacrifice the animal like he-goat ,chiken and buffaloes etc.The chikens and eggs are offered to the deity Sangram because he is not a higher God as his consort who is worshipped with he-goat or buffallo as offering.

According to the tribal custom the Tuima puja is to be observed as precautionary measure against the disease.Besides, for the welfare of the fields productivity,fertility and protection of the child from the danger of water the Tuima puja is performed.The Goddess Tuima and her husband are said to have control the water,land,wood and hills.It is believed that if their satisfaction is made by paying reverence to them, the whole supernatural world will not do any evil to human society.The Tuima puja no doubt an archaic ceremony which originated from the idea that the life was

The Lushais appear to have migrated from the Lushai hills who ethnically belong to the Mongolian stock and they are speaker of the Kuki- Chin of the Tibeto-Burman language group.(15). At present the total Lushai population in Tripura is 3778 . Majority of the Lushais are Chiristians
According to Dr. R Sharma " Ethnically and linguistically ,the Maghs are affiliated to the Kukis ".(16). While Dr .Grierson says that the Maghs belong to the Indo- Chinese race. (17). Besides, H.H. Risley is of opinion that the Maghs have strong Mongoloid traits.(18). They migrated to Tripura from Arakan. The total Magh population as per 1971 census is 13273 which is 2.94% of the total tribal population . The Maghs are devoutly Buddhists .The Chakmas belong to mongoloid group of people and they are an offshoot of tsak or tsek tribe of Arakan, who migrataed to Tripura from the Chittagong hills tracts. (19). The Chakmas are divided into several groups such as Malima,Baduya,Boma Koda, Kurchya etc. The po plution of Chakma is 28622 and they constitute 3.36% of the total tribal population of the state . Buddhism appears to have always been their religion. The Khasis, Garos, Mundas, Orangs, Santals, Lepchas, Bhils, Bhutias and Chimals are non-indigenous communities who came to Tripura only a few generations ago .
All tribes maintain a close proximity of habitation to water sources such as rives, Chharas in order to facilitate religious performances . It has been found that the tribals are very poor and improvident . The majority of the tribes are dependent on agriculture, while a considerable portion has been emplo yed in the Government service.The natural resources of Tripura have influenced on the character and occupational habit of the tribal people . Abundant availability of bamboo and woods have helped them to make buskates , mats and various types of wood-work of artistic merit. Besides ,supply of textile materials have developed the art of weaving in am important manner. The principal languages of the indigenous tribal and non-tribal population are Bengali and Kakbarak. Nearly 84.20% of the tribal population of Tripura speak

cotton thread along with the flowers of cotton thread.A newly made "richha" tied to its upper portion which contains some paddy and rice within its fold.A few bamboo poles small in size are also planted round the symbolic representation of the deity

GARIA DANCE

Thus, it spears that the pratice of planting a slender bamboo pole, with branches and leaves to make the symbolic represe ntation of the deity is the characteristic manifestation of animistic belief where the bamboo pole itself is worshipped in its natural form as Garia.(20)

It is important to note that the bamboo tree occopies the same high posation as enjoyed by the bel tree. It possesses the additional merit of warding off the evil spirit.(21).

The bamboo pole is decorated with a piece of new cloth and worshipped(22). during the pous sankranti in Bengal. I would like to give a faithfull exemple from west Bengal, like the Garia puja, a slender bamboo pole with the branches and leaves is also adored in the Gambhira festival.(23). In the north Bengal bamboo is worshipped as the village deity who is believed to be the caretaker of the agricultural fields, cottage industries and villages.(24). The leaves of bamboo are in use during the worshipping of sasthi Goddess who grants long life and children to the Bengalees even to day. The Garos and Kacharis also worship the bamboo pole after planting it in the ground.(25). In Uttar Pradesh Churait is a female evil spirit who is believed to live in the groves of bamboo.(26). It is found that the branches of bamboo are used in removing the bodily pain.(27).

The ingredients of this puja consist of paddy, undried rice, cotton, cotton thread, Garland of cotton thread, Richha, small earthen pots, eggs, fowls, chikens, Langi, (rice-beer) and wine etc. The Ochai taking a water pot(ghati) made of brass spirinkles the water on the symbol of the deity and he is chanting mantras. The Ochai takes two banana leaves or jeck fruit leaves or two bamboo slips in his hand and throws them in the air to know the result of the said puja. If a leaf falls flat on the ground and the remaining one falls on its back, it is a good result. This kind of tossing is called 'Patkarna.'(28).

When 'Patkarna' is observed and ended with a good sign, the Ochai sacrifices the fowls and chikens according to the traditional custom and the blood of the animal is sprayed on the banana leaf in front of the symbol of deity. Afterwards, the heads of the fowls along with a piece of meat cuttting from the neck are also placed on the banana leaf in the name

of deity. There after cutting the rectum of the fowl the Ochai examines the entrails if it is in good condition or not. If it is found good, it may be assumed that the result of the puja will bring welfare to the house holder.

There is a taboo associated with the Garia puja. During this ritual no body is allowed to cross the shadow of the symbolic representation of Garia. It is feared by the devotees that this kind of action will displease the deity.(29)

Then, at about 3 P.M. the ceremony of "Yakung chhurua" (feet washing) begins for the welfare of the inmates. The eggs and chiken are dedicated to the deity for his pleasure and appeasement.(30). It may be called a poultry rite like the 'KUKKUTI BRATA' of Bengalees. Moreover, the fowl is a symbol of fertility and the egg is greatly loved by the tribal deity because ' an egg like a virgin whom no one has touched or a pregnet woman who hold two souls at once.'(31). Therefore, sacrifice of eggs to the God is a common rite among the tribes of India as well as the tribes of Tripura also. It is believed by the tribals of the universe that any egg can cause maternity, crops and increase life strenth. An egg symbolies fertility cult and sex which is why the Tipras perform 'feet washing' ceremony as a poultry rite during the Garia puja.

After the performence of egg offering rite, the inmates of Garia start to carry the symbolic representation of Garia which is specially prepared for this purpose only. The richha (covering of female breast) is taken from the original symbol and some cotton, paddy and rice etc are kept on it and three knots are tied in order to make it a baggage. Then, the baggage is hung on the top of a spear which is called 'Kol'. As the representative of the deity, the kal is to move from one house to another in the selected village or para in case of a town. The inmates are mostly young stars whom are found singing, dancing and playing the drums. The songs are generally chours in nature and extremly erotic in character but the songs are melodious and rhythmic also. The house holder receives the inmates of Garia and pays reverence to the deity and the fowls and eggs are offered to Garia by him. The inmates of deity are also offered money, cloth, egg, wine and fowl according to the financial condition of the house

holder. The inmates of deity serve the blessing to the house holder on behalf of the deity Garia. The symbol of Garia, generally, is immersed at the end of seven days and seven night to the river at night but 'Kal' is not taken for immersion. From the retualistic point of view, it has been found that the worship of Kalia is observe strictly following the animistic rites and practices. Kalia seems to be the soul of dead who is suppposed to associate with the tree cult. Abdus sattar syas, " the most notable tree worship is the kalaia puja. This puja is rendered in a very solemn manner. The worshippers have to save their heads and place wine and other ingredients near the alter."(32). Kalaia is the spirit of ancestor whom the Tipras offer fowls, eggs etc. to please the deity. It is an idea of the animistic belief and this kind of ancestor worship is an archaeic form of tribal religion. In the Kalaia puja, the Ochai has to be observed some taboo and he has to be abstrained from all foods, even not a single droop of water.

NAKCHUMATAI PUJA:

The Nakchumatai puja has to be propitiated by the Ochai after the Randhak puja is over as a part of the Garia puja. The deity Nakchumatai basically is a spirit of the house or a gurdian spirit of the homestead. She is a benevolent deity who is supposed to remove the evil spirits from the house and cause of illness. In times of construction of a new house the worship of Nakchumatai is also performed. "The house owner wants to know from the Ochai weather the site is good for building a house or not. To be sure that the Ochai performes some rituals. This is called Semanaio".(33). A bamboo post of an arm length approximately and the bamboo canes are planted side by side. A banana leaf is kept is front of the planted bamboo and a handfull of rice is put on the banana leaf. There after the Ochai cuts partially the throat of a chiken and holds it on the rice to pour the blood. Now the Ochai completely severs the head of the chiken and he examines the entrails of the sacrificed chiken for conformattion of the site selection whether it has been good or not. After cutting the rectum of the chiken the entrails are also checked.(34). In this connection it may be added that a

'Yayamphra' is constructed by the Ochai and placed on the south eastern corner of the house as the symbol of Nakchumatai. The "Yayamphra" is covered by a piece of white cloth during the puja. Besides, four bamboo poles are planted in the four corners of the 'Yayamphra' to fix the canopy over the symbolistic representation of the deity. Moreover, three pieces of spilt bamboo are also planted in front of the door of a house on the courtyard. These are marked by a taboo which suspends all outside activities for the period of puja. Even the peoples of the house are not allowed to come out of the house as long as the taboo remains in operation. The outsiders are also prohibited to enter the house, they have to observe it strictly. The Ochai breaks these pieces of bamboo when the puja is over. The taboo is thus related essentially to the religious ceremonies and form together the base of all rituastic behaviour, a fundamental trait of the Tipra's religion, but is universal to all North. Eastern religion. The taboo is observed so that Supernatural powers are kept in their proper mood to bestow bless on the people.

The special offerings of the Nakchumatai puja consist of chyarak and chuakama. The chuakma is prepared in a bamboo pipe with the help of scum of wine from 'Langi' (earthen pot contained rice-beer) and water. The particular wine is called chaurak which is kept in a bottle.

BICHUKMA OR HAICHYKMA OR HAKAMA PUJA:

BICHUKMA is generally known as Haichukma or Hakama who is the spirit of the forest, malevolent in character. Another significant aspect of the deity is that she is the consort of Burasa. Although she rules over the forest, but as a house hold deity she has power to control the domestic animals also. It is found that Baichukma is worshipped with a certain veiw. In most of the cases she is worshipped when a domestic animal is lost. The worshipper believes that the proper worship will bring back the lost animal. Another reason is that the deity wards off the danger at the time of hunting and collecting fire wood. The Ochai performes the puja outside the courtyard, generally, in the forest. The Ochai constructs an Owathap as the symbolic prepresentation of the

deity. The offerings consist of two black fowls, a pig and a bottle of country wine.

BURASA PUJA:

Burasa is the Supernatural spirit who looks after the welfare of its inmates and is malevolent in character. In the Burasa puja, there is certainly an element of fear and it is confirmed that he stands for diseases. The Tipras believe that the severe pain of a child or fever are caused by the deity Burasa. It is said that he is the husband of Bichukma and the deity of forest. The Burasa puja is rendered so that the patient may be cured by blessings of the Supernatural spirit. On a certain occasion the Ochai observes this ritual in the deep part of the forest. The puja may be held in day light or in sylvan semidarkness of evening. The Ochai is accompanied by the male members of the family. The woman and children are not allowed to visit the place of puja. A bamboo made Owathap is needed for the ritual purpose. Like the other pujas the Ochai sacrifices two fowls or a pig along with the eggs. Thereafter, the head of the animal, pieces of nalls of the sacrificed animal, pieces of meat, pieces of wings and entrails are given to the deity along with the wine of bottle and langi(rice-beer). The puja is rounded off with a feast in which the entire members of worshiper's family take share, but nobody is allowed to bring the meat of the sacrificed animal from the forest into the village.

SAKLAKMATAI PUJA:

Saklak matai is worshipped in the last part of Magh or in Falgum as the benevolent deity. The deity is offered home-made cakes along with fowls and eggs. It is very interesting that a he-goat is sacrificed to the deity in the evening. The deity looks after the health of family members of the worshipper. Like the other deities Saklakmatai is propitiated by the Ochai and wine is also served to the deity properly.

THOMNAIROK AND BANIROK PUJA:

The Supernatural deity of death is worshipped as Thomnairok while Banirok is identified as the messenger of death news. They are worshipped in the hope they may keep good health all the year round and they will protect the danger of death. Thomnairok may be worshipped in the courtyard when Banirok is worshipped in the forest, out side the village. But it is also found that they are worshipped jointly in the courtyard during the Ker puja as Nagray (the guests). On the appointed day, the Ochai makes the symbolic representations of the deities by the help of green bamboo poles. When everything is in order, the Ochai sacrefices a he goat or she goat along with two chikens or two eggs for the pleasure of Thomnairok. Two fowls or two geeses are killed as offerings for Banirok. Afterwards, indigenous wine is offered to the deities.

CHHAKAL JOOK PUJA:

As has been noted in this chapter, the spirit has over whelming influence among the Tipras. Moreover, they believe that the witch causes severe disease and various harms. The guardian deity of witch is called chhakal jook who is nothing but the evil spirit of nature. The Tipras believe in the art of witch craft. They engage an Ochai to cure the long continued diseases. In front of the symbolic representation of deity , the Ochai offers the dryed meat of the tortoise and park along with wine as offerings. The worship of this deity takes place in the forest outside the village.

SIRIJUMDU AND SIRIJADU PUJA:

These two evil spirits cause barrenness of the women. They worshipped along with the other deities of malevolent character. Two fowls and two eggs are sacrificed to them.

Besides these pujas to the nature deities and spirits in their religious life, there are countless pujas of various kinds in which the Supernatural forces as the natura deities and spirits are adored. The PARA KAINAI PUJA, SATBHABI PUJA, KHARANGMA PUJA, KHARANGSA PUJA, MULIKHANAI

PUJA, KHURUKSONAI PUJA, KHOWAI CHANAIMA PUJA, BISHCHHNI SHAMANUNG PUJA, BORAI SINI PUJA, CHON GRANGMA PUJA AND CHUAMAKHLAE PUJA are also closely related with the tipras.(35). Dr. Kartik Lahiri is of opinion that KULARBHANGA RAJA, KUBUKDANDRA-JA, TUIBUK KALAKSHIRAJA, KALPURA, SANTHALIRA-JA, JAMPURA may be the names of the deities included into the Supernatural world of the Tipras.

Moreover, the other deities included in the pantheon of invisible Supernatural deities consist of LANGTHARI, BI-NAIGAR, KHUM CHAKKARA, SAMAGAR HARDI, MUSI-KHA KHUSIKA, DAGRAI, SURBAI, ALAK PALAK, DU-WARI, PAHARI and BALANG etc.(36). In fact, vast nu-mbers of deities exist in the kingdom of spiritual world of the Tipras who are not receiving due honours regularly because according to the need of the peoples the religious ceremony is held in honour of the certain deity occasinally.

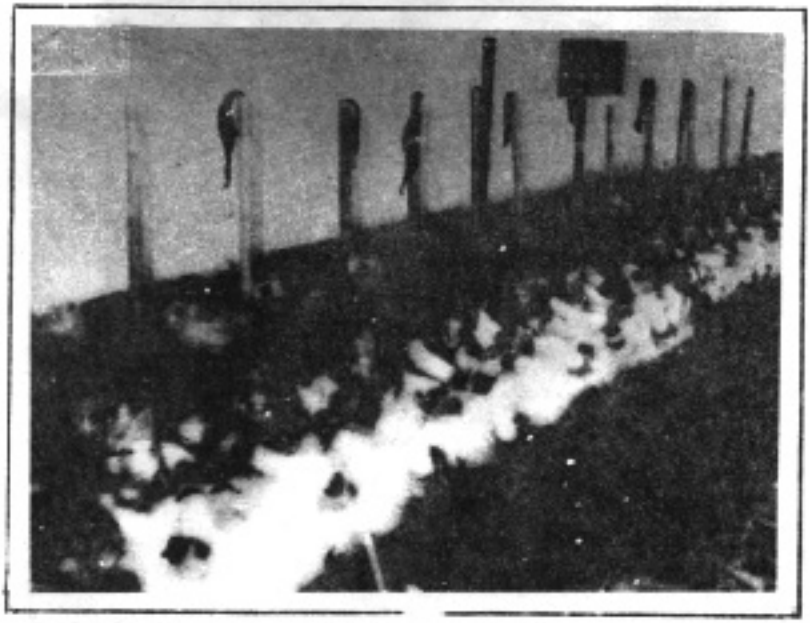
FESTIVALS OF THE TIPRAS:

The Tipras have frequent festivities. Among the collective celebrations which are held either in the temple or in any place mentioned may be made of the festivals: for example, the worship of the fourteen Gods and Goddesses in the Kherchi puja festival which lasts for seven days in July, the festival of Ker which occurs about the same time after the Kherchi puja is over, Bishu and Garia puja festivals which last for seven days and nights, the Tirthamukh festival in which the Tipras along with the other tribes pay reverence to the holy mother Tuima, Gomati and Dumbour in winter at the time of Makarasankranti, the Tuima puja which observes for a day, Maikatal, the festival of hervest in the month of Aswin or Agrahayan when the paddy is being gathered it is held.

KHARCHI PUJA FESTIVAL

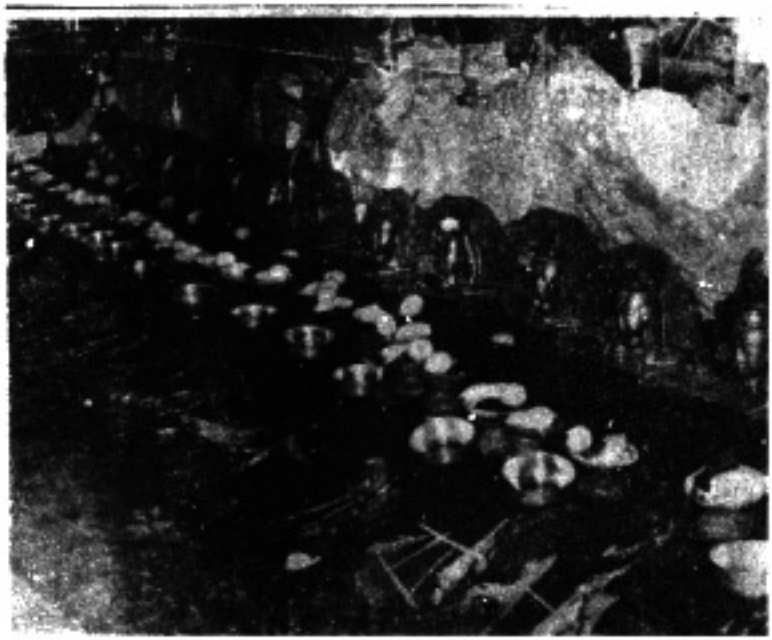
So far as Tripura is conncerned, the Kharchi puja one of the most popular festivals of the Tipras as well as the dwellers in Tripura, although it is said to have been influenced by the Brahmanical Hindus. As a matter of fact, this festival is associated with the indigenous tribal deities. This festival is

held sometimes in June-July on the Suklastami day which lasts for seven days and is essentially a festival of Tripurabasi. The Kharchi puja is held at old Agartala, 8 K.M. from the state capital Agartala. Old Agartala was the captital of the Mnikya dynasty and there was a temple of Chaturdashadevata where the Kharchi puja would take place. Before entering into detailed account of the Kharchi puja, we shall now devote a few lines to a description of the deities of the Kharchi puja. The fourteen head-images are worshipped at the time of Kharchi puja. Among the fourteen head-images, the thirteen are made of brass while one is made of silver only. They are all more or less equal in size measuring probably 22cm. in height along with throat and crown. During the puja each head image is placed on a wooden made PIRA rectangular in size. The PIRA measuring 25.40 cm. X 15.24 cm. is given as an Asana to which the deity is kept. The heads display wide forehead and hair indications are nil, the eyes are long horizental ones and eye brows are not marked. The face is oval and nose is long and semi-pointed. The mouth is indicated by a light longitudinal cut. The head bears an ornamented cinical crown consisting of beaded docoration. The faces are all expressive and workmanship is not of a high order.



KHARCHI PUJA

BURAH BEVATA



SACRIFICE OF ANIMAL

Iconographic identification of these images of brass are uncertain. Indeed curious and interesting but equally significant are two horns which are shown behind the crown. Besides, the identification of the head-images is not possible even in the field of genders also. The head-images bear no attributes according to the Brahmanical iconography so that they may be identified as the Brahmanical Gods and Goddesses. It is a fact that the broken head -image may not be supported by the Brahmanical iconography as the object of rituals.(37). But it is a fact that these head-images have been accepted as the popular deities by the Hindus of Tripura. There are more than one legends current in the state of Tripura about the fourteen deities of the Kharchi puja. These legends point to the antiquity of the said puja connected with the fourteen deities. (A) Sri Rajmala, a Bengali chronicale of the Royal House of Tripura provides information about the origin of the fourteen deities.

It is said that the king Tripur was extremely inimical and crude. He was killed by the God Siba for his irreligious habit. Afterwards, Trilochana was born by the blessing of Lord Siba as a son of widow, Hirabati. It was Trilochana, successor of Tripur who brought the fourteen deities from an island accompanied by the chantai and Dearai and the worship of the fourteen deities was performed by Trilochana.(38).

(B) Still another legend associates fourteen deities with the queen Harabati, the mother of Trilochana. One day she was festching water from a hilly stream, all of a sudden, she heard a few voices 'Mother, Mother, save us.'

As last queen came to know that the fourteen deities were resting on the branches of a shimul tree and they had been attacked by a terrible buffalo who was sleeping under the same tree at that time. The queen protected the deities against the buffalo by throwing her Richha over the body of the animal and the buffalo was killed by the queen's men. The deities came down from the shimul tree and began to drink the blood of buffalo.

It was a rainy night of Asadra and Queen's men were carring the deities on their backs making a peculiar sound 'Ehune'. At last the deities were brought to the royal palace when a room was alloted for them and they were worshipped since

then.

It is very interesting that the boy Trilochana was sent to the room of the fourteen deities to play with them. One day, suddenly the Queen noticed that Trilochana was coming out from that room in bloodless appearence. She peeped into the room and saw a he-goat was sacrificed by one of the deities. Afterwards, the deities began to drink the blood. Then, completing their drinks they revived the he-goat in the form of a child who was no other than Trilochana himself. At the sight of this scene, the Queen realised that the fourteen deities desired to drink blood. Henceforth, she made necessary arrangements for a he-goat in every day.(39).

According to Sri Rajmala the Brahmanical names of the fourteen deities are Hara, Uma, Hari, Ma, Bani, Kumar, Ganesh, Brahma, Prithi, Ganga, Abdi, Agni, Kamesh and Himadri.(40). Besides, Rajaratnakar, the sanskrit Rajmala also describes a list of the fourteen deities in the following verse

" HAROMA HARIMA VANI KUMARO GANAPA VIDHIH KSMABDHI GANGA SIKHI KAMO HIMADRISCA CATURDASA"(41).

The Original names of the fourteen deities are suggested by several authorities. Dr. Jagadish Gan choudhuri is of opinion that the tribal names of the deities consist of MATAI KATAR, MATAI KATARMA, MAILOOMA, KHOLOOMA, AKHTRA, BIKBITRA, TUIMA, SANGRANG, KALAIA, GARIA, NAKCHU MATAI, BICHUKMA, SIRIJEMDU and THOUMNAIROG.(42).

What is significant to note is that Dr. Gan choudhuri has given a remark that the way in which these fourteen deities of the Tipras have been identified with the great deities of Brahmanical pantheon is mostly imaginary.(43).

The Tipras recognize one Supernatural supreme God called MATAIKATAR (44). (greatest God) who is believed to be the creator of universe. The Supreme being Mataikatar with his wife MATAI KATARMÁ (greatest Goddess) are supposed to control all the deities like the other tribal peoples of the North East India. After making an analysis of the Tipras

deities mentioned in this chapter formerly, a suggestion may be put forward in respect of the identification of these deities. The deities whom the Tipras pay reverence during the Kharchi puja are nature deities, spirits and ancestors.

MATTAIKATAR: SUPREME SUPERNATURAL FORCE
MATAIKATRAMA: CONSORT OF MATAIKATAR
MAILOMA: THE EARTH
KHOLUMA: COTTON:
AKHATRA: THE SEA
BIKBITRA: THE SKY
TUIMA: THE WATER
SANGRANG: THE MOUNTAIN
KALAIA: THE SPIRIT OF ANCESTOR
GARIA: THE SPIRIT OF WAR, WEALTH AND FERTILITY
NAKCHUMATAI: THE TUTELARY SPIRIT OF THE FAMILIES
BICHUKMA: THE FOREST
SIRIJUMDU: THE SPIRIT OF THE BARRENNESS OF WOMAN
THUMNAIROK: THE SPIRIT WHO BRINGS THE MESSAGES OF DEATH.(45).

Similar to the tribal of the North East India, there is a duality of God and Goddess in the religion of the Tipras and each of these deities has qualifing term of address of fha and ma which means father and mother respectively. It is good to remind ourselves that the sky, the Sea and the Mountain seem to be the man God and the Earth, the water, the Cotten tree and the Forest become the woman Goddess and so on.

The Kharchi puja is performed by the indigenous priests of the Tipras. The chief priest is called Chantai. The assistants of the Chantai are as follows:

GALIM: 14 Nos.
NARAN: 4 Nos.
BARIFANG: 8 Nos.

RIAKCHU: 8 Nos.
KHAPURITINAI: 1 No.

The ceremonial worship generally starts on a day before the Kharchi festival. At first the Lampra puja is celebrated and traditionally the symbolic representation of the deity is constructed by the green bamboo poles. Afterwards, the BUKHUKCHINIROK puja is observed in the middle of the day. The seven bamboo poles measuring 1 mtr. 30 cm. are planted on the ground and at the top of the each of the poles, the branches of the Banatulsi are kept. These seven poles of the green bamboo are the symbolic representations of the deities who are no other than the seven sisters in which one is married and the rests are unmarried. The opinion of K.C. Singha(46) is that they are seven witches or Dakinis. The fourteen eggs, three he-goats, and two ducks are required as offerings to the deities.

When the worship of BUKHUKCHINI is over, the most important GHAT DEKHANI ceremony is performed. The assistants of the Chantai taking the head-images move to the Howora river for ceremonial bathing of the deities. After the bathing is over, the deities are carried back to the temple. At that time the assistant priests priests bearing the umbrellas on their heads make a peculiar voice 'ehune'. In Sri Rajmala, it has been recorded that a curious religious ceremony called NISHI PUJA would observe at night in the courtyard of the temple of Chaturdasha devata. In fact, it is said that the human sacrifices were offered to the fourteen deities during the historical period to the reign of Maharaja Govinda Manikya who is said to have ceased the human sacrifices from the religious rituals of the tribal peoples of Tripura.

The Kharchi puja is celebrated in the newly contructed temple which is shown outside the main temple. The ingredients which are closely connected to the worship of the fourteen deities are cited below:

INGREDIENTS OF TEE KHARCHI PUJA

BUFFALO: 1 No.
RICHHA: 14 Nos.

HE-GOAT:14 Nos.
EGGS: 28 Nos.
PIRA: 14 Nos.
BAMBOO PIPES: 14 Nos.
BAMBOO POLES: 14 Nos.
SPINNER: 1 No.
BIG BASKET: 1
SMALL, BASKET: 1 No.
UMBRELLA:
BAMBOO MADE: 1 No.
PIECES OF WHITE CLOTH:14 Nos.
LAMP STAND: 14 Nos.
SMALL EARTHEN:
WATER POT: 28 Nos.
DUCK: 4 No.
PIGEON: 4 No.
JHARI OR BRASSMADE WATER POT: 1 No.
WOODEN STRICK: 1 No.
SMALL SPUD:14 Nos.
WOODEN SANDAL: 2 Nos.
MORTAR FOR GRINDING CORN: 1 No.
COTTON THREAD, COTTON, TAKKAL, TURMERIC, VERMILLION, WINE, BANANA LEAVES, UNDRIED RICE, etc.

I have come in close contact with the chief priest Chantai during the Kharchi puja and found that the traditional religious beliefs and customs of which the most interesting seems to have been the sacrifice of animal and egg to the beloved deities. It deserves mentioning here that the Chantai offers nothing to the deities according to the " POROHIT DARPAN" OR " ARYACHAR PADDHATI" but he follows the primitive method of his ancestors. Like the Ochai, the Chantai does not sacrifice the animal. Ile chants the mantras as per conventional tribal way and his assistant priest sacrifi-

ces the animal. From the field investigation of the Kharchi puja, it has been found that the holy priest Chantai and his assistants are still dogmatic to follow their primitive practices.

From time immemorial, the fourteen deities are worshipped by the Royal House of Tripura as well as the peoples of this land. The deities have been attained the status of the state palladium under the patronage of the Bhrahmanical Royal house. These deities are not worshipped every day in the temple of old Agartala excepting the three heads. It is a traditional mysterious thing in Tripura that during the Kharchi puja all the heads are exihibited to the devotees only.
On the holy occasion of the Kharchi puja, a grand fair is held at Old Agartala near the temple of Chaturdash-devatas. This fair continues for seven days in which a good number of peoples assemble for shoping in each and every year. The devotees are found to purchase offerings to pay reverence to the beloved deities. Archaeologically, the antiquities of the head images of the fourteen deities is incontestably confirmed by the stylistic grounds. On the basis of the extent features, the heads may be assigned to C 13th to 15th century A.D. It is interesting to note that the word " CATURDASA DEVATA" is met for the first time on the coin of Ratna Manikya,(47) the king of Tripura and the name is not come to have in use prior to the reign of Ratna Manikya. Besides, from the study of the coin of the king, it is known that Ratna Manikya issued this particular type of coin which become an unique bearing of the Branmanical Sanskritised name " CATURDASADEVA" associated with the fourteen bamboo poles as the animistic representations of the deities. Therefore, it may be suggested that the fourteen deities of the KIRATA peoples have been identified with the higher deities of Bramanical pantheon, probably as early as the C 13th to 15th century A.D.
In the Kharchi puja, the religious atmosphere is that of peaceful harmony and tolerance. The tribal and non-tribal peoples have assembled here togather in the name of fourteen deities. The three major religious faiths of Tripura are Saivism, Saktaism and Vaisnavism and the devotees of these religious sects crowd every year to pay their homage at the

feet of the fourteen deities on the holy occasion of Kharchi puja in the month of July.

KER PUJA FESTIVAL BY THE ROYAL HOUSE OF TRIPURA:

One of the most important festivals of Tripura is the Ker puja festival in which the national deities of the Tipras are worshipped yearly by the Royal house of Tripura on tuesday or saturday just after two weeks of the Kharchi puja festival.
The place of the Ker puja has to be changed by the Royal House of Tripura from time to time, but the Chantai along with his assistant are still maintaining their indigenous tribal religious behaviour patterns. It is the most ancient religious festival of the Tipras and the Royal House. It was held in the area of Chaturdasadevata bari previously. After wards, the Ker Choumuhani of present Agartala was selected for the ritual but due to some irreligious activities and other reasons the place of th Ker puja have to be shifted to the bank of Jaganath dighi in front of the Ujjayanta palace.
The Ker puja is performed according to the command of the chief priest Chantai. Fearing the Supernatural forces the Chantai strictly follows some rules and there is a proclamation that the person who breaks these taboos shall be punished by the Supernatural powers.

Moreover it is also a fact that the Chantai is in the higher position during the Ker puja who has power to punish the taboo breakers and his judgements are also applicable in case of the king of Tripura if he does any wrong during the observence of taboo for this ritual. A taboo means a forbiden activity, something that is not permitted something which stands against divine approval and is not allowed by norms of religious behaviour. There are severai taboos associated with the Ker puja. The Chantai becomes the supreme authority who can punish every bodies if any one breaks the taboos included in the Ker puja. Now-a-days Rajandar, in front of Ujjayanta palace (west side only) Jaganathdighi along with its four banks, Durgabari are selected as the restricted area for the Ker puja in which the taboos will be effected.

The taboos are seriously followed within the above mentioned areas. No body is allowed to enter into the said area and the peoples who are living within these areas are not expected to come out of their houses as long as the Ker puja continues and thus they have to store their wants well in advance. The taboos of the Ker puja operate for nearly 32 hours (2nights and a day). Besides, the other taboos related to the Kerpuja are as follows:

(a) It is prohibited that a diseased person may remain in the area of puja and side by side the pregnent woman is not allowed to stay there also.

(b) The birth of a baby or the death of a person have to be controlled with in the holy area of the Ker puja.

(c) I have come in contact with the Ker puja and observed that no dody of the Rajandar are allowed to wear shoes, turban and sandal. The use of an umbrella is not permitted also.

(d) It is necessary to keep the area of the taboo undisterbed. The musical performences, dancing and making un-necessary noise are absolutely forbiden so long as the puja is continued.

These kind of taboos are effective not only in the case of tribals of Tripura, but the whole North East India. The tribes of the different countries of the world are also following the taboos when the nature deities spirits and ancestors are propitiated by them.

It is a fact that the Chantai believes that the trespassers are supposed to bring evil external influences and thus polute the sanctuous atmoshere of the holy Ker puja. The Supernatural power are supposed to be enraged by this. also.

On the evening of the selected day the Chantai along with his assistants arrive at the palace gate by a jeep and they are received by the employees of the Royal house as well as the In-charge of Devayatan section, Govt. of Tripura, with due honour. The priests are given selters and fooding according to their need. Then, as a signal of the begining of the Ker festival, a bomb is brust open to inform the citizen of Agartala that the ritual is started.

Next morning nearly at 6 A.M. wearing the Royal dress the Chantai comes out along with his assistants from the resting

place. The dresses of the Chantai consist of a turban, a colourful Royal lose shirt, a white slacks, a modesty scarf and a golden sacred thread in which the symbols of the deities are engraved. The Chantai goes in a procession of his assistants along with the Royal employees and the defence force of the Govt. of Tripura to show the honour to the ancient throne of the Manikya dynasty which is made of ivory and silver. Afterwards, the Chantai is followed again by the same procession when he goes to pay reverence to the Goddess Mangal chandi who is worshipped in a temple of the palace compound. After ceremonial reverences are paid to the Mangalchandi, the Chantai is taken in front of the procession and the procession breaks out after crossing the road which stands in front of the Ujjyanta palace.

A brahmin priest Sri Anil Biswas who is an employee of the Devayatan section, Govt. of Tripura, taking a list in his hand follows the Chantai to the selected holy place on the bank of Jagannath dighi. A land of rectangular shaped is well cleaned for the purpose of puja in which the bamboo poles are planted in the ground as the symbolic representation of the nature deities, spirit and ancestors. The articles for the construction of the symbolic representation of the nature deities, spirits and ancestors consist of the bamboo poles in different shaped and sized, the pieces of split bamboo, the long pins of stick of bamboo, the ropes of bamboo cane, the bamboo pins of floral designs and the bamboo poles which are decorated by the geometrical design around its body from the top to bottom. Our first hand experience of the Ker puja is charted below:

PLACE: In front of the Ujjyanta palace on the bank of the Jaganath dighi (northern side).
CHANTAI: Sri Takrai Chantai
Year: 1982

INGREDIENTS OF RITUAL

SMALL EARTHEN POT: 28 Nos.
SMALL EARTHEN DISH: 28 Nos.
HE-GOAT: 15 Nos.

EGG: 28 Nos.
PIGEON: 8 Nos.
DUCK: 4 Nos.
WINE: 2(bottle)
LANGI: 2(pitcher)
COTTON, COTTON THREAD (RED AND WHITE), UNDRIED RICE, TURMERIC, BANANA, BATASA, PIECES OF WHITE CLOTH, A BAG OF DRIED RICE, VERMILLION, BAMBOO PIPES, RIVER CLAY, RICHHA and MUSTERED SEEDS.

SPECIAL LEAVES OF RITUAL:

BANANA
CHHAN
CHATIR
DUMRA
LARIDAM
CHAKMA
KUMPLAI

The Chantai stands on the ground in front of the Owathap, the symbolic representation of the Lampra deities, when a jari is shown in his hands. The jari is a sacred pot made of brass like a Kamandulu or a jar with a curved pipe on the middle of it. The jhari is filled with water and a branch of Khumplai tree along with its flowers and the leaves. Chanting the mantras the Chantai sprinkles the water on the banana leaves, standing before the owathap the Galim takes his position on the left side of the Chantai holding a Kharga in his hands. The Chantai droops a considerable quantity of water on the Kharga, pigeon and eggs. With deep devotion the Galim Chants the mantras while he half cuts the neck of pigeon and the blood is spreyed to the symbols of the deities. Afterwards, he completely severs the neck of the pigeon. Now the Chantai droops the water from the jhari to the head of pigeon, Owathap and Kharga.

During this ritual a bamboo made instrument for music begins to sound which is locally called 'Vomra'. The Vomra is an instrument which is used to ward off the evil spirits from the holy area of the ker puja.

In this way the Goddess Tuima and Sangrang have to be propitiated by sacrificing the he-goats, eggs, and pigeon etc. In case of a he-goat the Galim severes completely the neck of the he-goat and the blood of the sacrificial animal has to be sprayed on the symbols of the deities.

The chantai along with the Galim following the way prescribed by the ancient tradition adores MATAI KATAR, MATAI KATARMA, MAILOOMA, KHOLOOMA, KALAIA, GARIA, NAKCHUMATAI, HICHUKAM, SIRIJUMDU, THUMNAIRAG, and BANIROG, JAMPIRAI, BUKHUKSINI ROG, BALANG, CHINUI HAPANG AND CHINUI TUI CHHA MATAI by sacrificing the he-goats, eggs, ducks and pigeons with due honour. So far as the Ker puja is concerned, the worship of BANIROG and THUMNAIROG hold a high position among the pujas of the other deities. A special MATAINAKH (temple of deity) is constructed with the four bamboo poles and a red coloured canopy. The symbolic representation of THUMNAIROG and BANIROG are made with the green bamboo poles which are well decorated with geometrical designes. The symbols are placed on a piece of white cloth below of which a red piece of cloth is also present. The symbols of the deities measure 1 m. 40 cm. in height. The symbolic representation of BANIROG is tied with the red thread of cotton while the THUMNAIROG's symbol is festened with white thread of cotton.

It is an actual fact that THUMNAIROG AND BANIROG are called 'NAGRAY'. In the Kakbarak 'NAGRAY' means 'guest' (48). It is believed that both the Supernatural deities of the sylvan forest visits the arban area as the guest of the Royal house of Tripuura. THUMNAIROG is the spirit of death while BANIROG is the messenger of the death news. The state level puja of the deities is performed to ward off the evlil done by the death and to get rid of suffering caused by the messenger of death news.

Tripura is a land of twelve sacred rivers and twelve holy

mountains. The Tipras along with other tribes are extremely depend upon the rivers and the mountains for which the propitiations are made to them in every year during the Ker puja. In the courtyard of the Ker puja, the symbolic represe ntations of the rivers are made in a peculiar way. It has been examined that the twelve pieces of Banana leaf are placed on the ground and twelve clod of earth are kept on them whom are adored as the deities of rivers 'Tuichha matai'. In front of these lumps of earth, twelve long pin of stick of green bamboo are planted in the ground which are festened with the thread of cotton. Each of the cotton thread is tied with a piece of cotton. These bamboo strips represent the mou ntain deities of the Tipras whom thay are called 'Chinui hapang matai'. In the same way thase deities have to be propitiated by killing he-goats, pigeons and eggs.

Last of all, the Chantai with the help of the Galim serves wine and Langi(rice beer) to each and every deities worshipped there and he leaves the place. After the departure of the Chantai, the Galim conducts the worship of BALANG. Balang is the deity of the forest. The symbolic representation of the deity along with his consort seems to be a wounderful creation of an indigenous artistic priest Galim. The meterials required for the contruction of the symbolic representations of the deities as follows:

(1) The bamboo strip which has perforated the pieces of turmeric messureing 28 cm. in height.

(2) The rope of bamboo cane which are tied with cotton thread along with cotton.

(3) The skewers of bamboo in which the bows are attached at the lower portion.

(4) The small bamboo slips pointed at both the sides.

The Glaim with the aid of these articles constructs two similar symbolic representations of the forest deities. Chanting the mantras the Gelim sacrifices the pigeons as the offerings to the deities. Thus the worship of the deities in the morning is ended. In the afternoon, just before the evening, one of the assistants of the Chantai taking the symbolic representa tions of Thumnairog and Banirog places them on his shoulder and he holds the symbols tightly. It is very notable incident that the bearer of the symbols is carried by the another

assistant priest on his back and he moves towards the main gate of the palace compound. On the middle of the road, these deities are worshipped by sacrificing the pigeons and wine but the deities are kept on the shoulder of the assistant priest who have to be remained also on the back of the aforesaid assistant like a child.

In the corner of the Jaganath dighi near the maingate of the palace an area of land is cleaned. Two bamboo poles measuring 2 mtr. in height are planted in the ground when a bamboo pole is tied to them horizontaly. A bamboo slip is placed over the tops of the two bamboo poles hemisperically. Below this bow-shaped portal, two lumps of earth are made digging the holes there. The symbols of the deities are placed on the ground in front of these lumps of earth which are supported by the portal. A bag of dried rice and eggs is hung from the right side of the portal.

The ingredients of the worship of these 'Nagray' (guests) deities consist of VERMILLION SPREYED EGGS, TWO EARTHEN POTS CONTAINED FULL OF UNDRIED RICE, BANANA, BATASA, TURMERIC PIECES, TWO DUCKS, TWO BOTTLE OF WINE, COTTON THREAD OF RED AND WHITE COLOUR, PREACHED RICE, MUSTERD SEEDS, COTTON, TWO EARTHEN POTS FULL OF WATER.

Among the leaves, these are to be mentioned.

CHHAN

BANANA

CHATIR

DUMRA

LARIDAM

CHAKMA

Besides, the skin of the KANAK tree is also needed for this ritual. The chief priest Chantai remains absent during the Nagray puja. The chief assistant of the Chantai taking a small pitcher contained full of water seats on the Asana of banana leaves. Frist of all, he divides the ingredients into two shares equeally and places them in front of the symbols of the

deities. In the same time an Ochai places a slip of bamboo over the another slip and begins to rub repeatedly. This kind of continueous rubbing produces holy fire and the lamp of the puja is lighted by it. However, the ingredients consist of the leaves and skins of trees are amalgameted by the assistant priest on the banana leaves and the bamboo pole, the symbolic representation of Banirog is placed on these articles and the symbol of the deity is tied with the white thread of cotton.

In the same way the symbol of THUMNAIROG is also tied with the red thread of cottom. Now, the suymbols of the deities are placed in the holes and planted properly in the ground and many bamboo strips are also sticked around two symbols. It has been observed during our stay in the sanctuary with enthusiasm that the empty egg shells are kept on the tops of the bamboo splits.

After this type of religious practices, the ochai fastens the structural symbols of the deities and the planted bamboo strips with the red and white cotton threads.

The Ochai chants the mantras and he droops water on the symbols of the deities. Two ducks are brought near the Ochai in which one of them is vermillion spreyed on its head and beak. The Ochai chanting the mantras half cuts the neck of the duck in the traditional way. As soon as the sacrifice is over, the Ochai sprinkles the blood on the symbols of the deities and serves wine to the deities according to ancient custom.

Next, we have been found that the Ochai forecasts the results of the Ker puja, if the reading is auspicious, the Ker puja should have to be arranged again.

The fire produced by the rubbing of two pieces of bamboo splits, is received by the citizen of Agartala and they keep the sacred fire in their houses with a hope that it will bring, no doubt, good fourtune to them as the blessing of the deities.

The distinctive characteristic of the Ker puja is that it has not been influnced by the other religions. The Ker puja is held from an unrecorded period for the safiety from diseases as well as to protect the state from the crude hands of death.

In this connection I would like to interprete the ramark of Kaliprasanna Sen who is of opinion that the principle part of the Ker puja includes the worship of "NAGARA"(City) from which the term "NAGRAI PUJA" comes into light.(49). But Mr. Sen has not been given a faithful opinion on the linguistic ground because. the Kakbarak word stands as "NAGRAY" in place of "NAGRAI" which means the guest in English or ATITHI in Bengali.(50). Moreover Mr. Sen has sought to prove that the Ker puja reminds us as the newly creation of the nature (51) which is also a controversial remark. Actually from the anthropological point of view the Ker is not related to the creation only, the chief aim of this ritual is to be received blessing from the Supernatural forces for security of the peoples of Tripura from the natural calamities and havoc of death. In other words it may be suggested that the Ker puja performed to safe the creation from the dangers made by the evil spirits and to preserve the creation of the nature properly.

A short description of the Ker puja has been presented by Dr. Kirtik Lahiri in his "Tripura Temple", he says, " one of the occasion of Ker puja which is a royal but tribal, a bamboo is erected, and to chanting of mantras (a kind of spell) the top of the bamboo is laid to touch the ground" (52).

I have a privilage to take part in the Ker puja as an invited visitor in the Rajandar which was arranged by the Capt. Nagendra Chandra Debbarman. But, so far as the Ker puja is concerned, it may be pointed out that such type of miraculous event of erected bamboo might not been practiced by the Chantai during the Ker puja. On the whole the report of Dr. Lahiri posesses no merit and basically it has been orinated from the rumour which is current among the emotional peoples of Tripura. Even though the tipras have without doubt been drawn into the ocean of Hinduism they seem to have following their primitive culture as yet which is clearly proved by the ceremony of the Ker puja which is must with the Royal House of Tripura and the Tipras along with the Noatias, Jamatias, Riangs, Rupinis, Kolais and Ucaai.

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS OF THE RIANGS:

The Riangs belive in one Supreme God called MATAI KATAR who in course of time has been identified as ACHU SIBRAY or SIBRAY under the direct influence of Brahmanical SIBTHAKUR of Bengal. The supernatural supreme God is the over lord of men, deities, and evil spirits who are said to be responsible for all the diseases and sufferings in this universe. The Supernatural powers as deities are worshipped who inhabit the streams, hills, bamboos, water, cannals and trees. The nature deities and spirits have to be propitiated by sacrificing animals, eggs and wine to get rid from the sufferings caused by the cruel hands or nature.
The worship of the deities is conducted by the Aouchai who is analogous to the Ochai of the Tipras. The Aouchai always follows the traditional indigenous religious rites and practices.

GENERAL PUJAS ASSOCIATED WITH JHUM CULTIVATION:

Although a minor section of the Riangs give up the habit of Jhum cultivation recently, but they have solely to depend on Jhum cultivation through the ages. After the selection has been final, an areas of the jhum is cleaned for the worship of ACHU SIBRAY RAJA whom the Riangs offer the dried-rice with a pipe of water. The Riangs who are God fearing want to know the approval of the God behind the selection of jhum by the "PAR"(toss). According to S.B.K. Dev Barman" a piece of bamboo is thus cut vertically into two and thrown above to fall upon the ground. If the two pieces fall upon the ground in positions which are contrary to the other the Jhumias deem it to be a good sign.(53). "Then, it is believed that this site of jhum is approved by the nature deity. Moreover, a lump of earth is carried from the plot by the head of the family and places it in his bed below the pillow at night. The Jhum cultivation would be benifitable if he "dreams of buffalo, cattle, marriage ceremony, clear water, fishing etc."(54).
In times of burning the Jhum an important ritual is observed. Before setting fire the house holder cleans a portion of his courtyard and a black earthen pot, a pitcher full of water,

and a broom are placed on the ground. Just before the firing of Jhum, the Aouchai spells the mantras. The inner meaning of the mantras is as follows. "If there are off spring they should not be in a position to rebuke me or curse me too. The reason is that our ancestors had observed and began this ritual which we are continuing."(55). To please the spirit of the fire some quantity of Suai, Hanmcham etc. are thrown into the Jhum-fire as foods.

The woner wife of the Jhum is not allowed to come to the Jhum in the fire setting ceremony, but she has to worship for the souls of the burnt animals and birds. A piece of turmeric is kept under the ground of Jhum, unless it is done there is fear that the forest deity BURAHA might cause evil to spoil the crops. Besides, some MAICHUIS are also thrown so that the spirits of the forest might not throw the seeds of grass on the Jhum.

"Immediately after the setting of fire a few deities namely HAICHUMA, BURAHA, BANIRAC and MAINOUKHMA are worshipped. The rituals is called HATAMALAIMI when two pigs, three chickens and four dishes are needed. Even the house wife is also required to perfom simultaneously a ritual.(56). At the courtyard she is to place a quantity of sesamum oil, cotton, a suai seed and a Maicham. This is to relieve the mother earth from the burning sensation."

another rite in connection with the Jhum is held when weeding for the last time is done. The observations of Dr. Gan Choudhuri may be cited below:

"Deities like Buraha, Haichuma, Mainoukma, Khunoukhma, Tuima etc. are also propitiated with spells, offerings and sacrifices. As the shifting cultivation on hills is almost entirely dependent on rainfall, in case of drought,the Riangs resort to sympathetic magic, Water is dropped on a tray and spreaded in the courtyard; the Goddess of water is worshipped; a lump of soil is thrown into water, a particular insect called CHECHEMA is buried alieve with the head down ward, and also a sound in imitation of a frog is produced by rubbing a laisra leaf(phrynium imbricatum) against the bottom of a basket similar sound may be produced by rubbing a split against a scratched bamboo."(57). Their last rite in connection with the Jhum is performed when harvesting is over.

The Riangs do not consume any thing from their Jhum unless some sort of offer is given to the deities. The Aouchai conducts the puja in the Jhum. The symbolic representations of the deities are made with the green bamboo poles. A fowl and a Richha are offered to the deities. Afterwards, the Aouchai places a bamboo pole which is well decorated with the designs of flowers around it, in his shoulder and holds barley tree in his hand. The Aouchai comes to the house of the Jhumia and asks his wife. "How shall I enter into your house along with vast quantity of paddy?"
The Aouchai also adds "Your house is too small."
The hoousewife replies, "I shall build a big house for you, dont mind, please enter into my house."
Then, the Aouchai enters in the house and places the first paddy bandle in the granary. The festival of eating newly grown rice in the month of Bhadra have to be observed by the Riangs in which they performe "RANGTOUK" . It has been found that the deities MAINOUKHMA and KHUNOUKHMA are propitiated by the Aonchai on the occasion of RANGTOUK. Two earthen pots are decorated with the undried powder of rice, vermillion and garlands. The earthen pots are filled up with newly grown rice of the Jhum and at the top of the pots some oval pabbles collected from the Jhum are kept properly. These pabbles are called "Fourtune stones". The Riangs are in belief that if the pabbles remain in the house, the house holder will enjoy a happy life.
However, one of the pots is taken for the worship of Mainoukhma while another is to be regarded as Khunoukhma. Some cotton is placed on the pots of the deities. A banana leaf is spreaded on the ground over which two earthen pots are rested as the symbolic representations of deities. The ingredients consist of betel nuts, betel leaves, seven eggs, vermillion, cotton, cotton thread, fowls, ducks, chickens, turmeric, cucumber, wine, chindra, marma and newly grown rice of the Jhum.
The Aouchai chanting the mantras begins the puja by sprinkling water from his bamboo tube or pipe or brass made pot on the symbols of the deities. The sacrificial fowl is half cut in the neck and the blood is spreyed on the symbols. Afterwards, the neck of the fowl is completely severed. The

head, a piece of meat from the neck and wine are offered to the deities. The puja is rounded off with a big feast in which meat, dried newly rice and wine are served among the entire village of the Jhumias. But, before the beginning of the feast, the Aouchai examines the entrails of the sacrificed fowl and forecasts the result of puja if in favour or not.

During MAIKATACHAMA(the festival of eating newly grown rice) the ceremony of NAKCHUKA is held. NAKCHUKA is the tuletary spirit of house hold. It is believed that she is the Godddess of snake and she is born from the DUMBUR waterfall. The Riangs also like to say that the worship of NAKCHUMA originally has established by them in Tripura and they adored the deity first also. JAKARI, the symbolic representation of the deity is made by the bamboo cane. The Aouchai sacrifices a fowl in the same way mentioned above and after spreying the blood, the neck of the fowl completely is severed. Then the dried meat of the fowl, dried rice of the Jhum along with Langi(rice-beer) are offered to the deity. As soon as the puja is over, JAKARI is tied to the roof of the house.

Besides, some Riangs also perform the worship of MAIMINGKOTA. The dried Binnirice of the Jhum,fowl or he goat or duck are offered in the name of the deity for the production of more rice and hording of a good quantity of wealth.

TUYABUMA PUJA:

Generally; the TUYABUMA puja is celebrated onece a year. The nature deity of water is identified as the Goddess TUYABUMA. Now a days the Riangs are in belief that Tuyabuma is the wife of the God ACHU SIBRAY. The worship of Tuyabuma is observed by an individual or collectively in the community level by the villagers raising a fund. The deity, Tuyabuma has to be propitiated by sacrificing hegoats or buffalos in the same way according to the tradition of the Riangs. The worship of TUIMA of the Tipras is similar to the worship of TUYABUMA. So we are not like to give a detailed report on the worship of Tuyabuma bnecause the rites and practices of the worship of TUIMA has been

described in the previous pages.

GARIA PUJA:

Garia is a popular deity whome the Riangs pay revernce in every year in the Chaitra-sankranti day which lasts for seven days up to the 6th Vaisakh. Like the Tipras, the deities of the Riangs have no antropomorphic forms. A green bamboo pole measuring 1 mtr. 30 cm in hight is decorated with the floral designs around it. It is tied by the threads of white and black coloured cotton. A garland of cotton also is hung at the top of the pole (it is called Keda) which is planted in the ground when a banana leaf is placed in front of it. Chanting the mantras the Aouchai sacrifices the fowls and eggs along with the fruits. At last wine is served to the deity. It has been foound that the symbol of the deity is carried from the house to house by a good number of devotees on request. The members of the carring party of the Garia begin to sing and dance with the sound of drum rythemically. The songs are more or less erotic in character, but it is known from the song that the blessings of the deity is necessary to relief the sufferings and to increase the production of crops. The Riangs believe that Garia is the deity who gives wealth, strength and children.

KER PUJA:

The Ker puja is observed by the Riangs for the welfare of the village where the village community take share of it. The sujpernatural belief of the Riangs is that the festival Ker is held in order to shield from disease, anxiety, epidemic, capture, and all sort of natural calamities caused by the Supernatural deities.

The Ker is celebrated in the month of Phalgun-chaitra on any Satureday or Tuesday.Sri Pradip nath Bhattacharjee is of the opinion that"The chief characteristic of the Ker is MUDRA which indicates binding of fasterning with seal of an area.During the puja the villagers are restricated to light an oven,they are not supposed cross the boundary of Ker".(58).

According to the anthropological point of view,the term MUDRA can be replaced by the word TABOO.Literally taboo means restricted activity, something which stands against social approval and is disallowed by the norms of behaviour.The taboos,the socio-religious restraints have to be given a religious coating by the Riangs who believe that the nature deities punish the breaker of the taboos.

In the Ker puja,like the Tipras the Riangs worship several deities viz.,MATAI KATAR, MATAI KATARMA,BURAHA, THUNAIROU, BANIROU,KANYAMA,MAI NUKMA,KHUNOUKHMA,AKHITRA RAJA ,BHIKITRA RAJA, HAICHUMA,IAMPIRA, KALPIRA,LONGDRAI,BILAORI,BINAIGAR and other.The Ker puja which is performed by the Riangs in community level is called SOAN PUJA.The AGAN PUJA is held in the month of Agrahayana in connection with the Jhum cultivation by the Hoda of Riangs society.The chitra puja is observed in order to secure the village from the natural calamities.The special Ker puja is performed,if any internal and external disterbances are likely to bring danger in to the village.

There are several taboos which are observed during the Ker puja.Some of the taboos are as follows.

(a) It is necessary to disallow a person who is in the sick bed and his days are numbered.

(b) To setting apart of a pregnent woman from the area of the Ker puja should be maintained properly.

(c)No one is allowed to leave the village and no outsider is permitted to trespass the village as long as the taboo rests during the Ker puja.

The ingredients of the Ker puja consist of UNDRIED RICE, FRUITS, TURMERIC,VERMILLION,COTTON-THREAD, BAMBOO POLES,BAMBOO TUBE,FOWLS,HE-GOATS,EGGS, PIGEONS ,DUCK,SMALL EARTHEN POTS,BANANA LEAVES,WINE , LANGI(rice-beer) etc.

During the ritual the GHANGS(bamboo made symbols) are

planted in the boarder line of the village so that no one is allowed to trespass the village. A Ghang is made out of a strip of green bamboo, two sides of which are sharpened.At the time of puja two sharpened ends of the Ghang are planted in the ground like a bow.

The Aouchai conducts the puja according to the indigenous traditional ways of the Riangs.

The animals are sacrificed and the blood is spreyed to the symbols of the deities.Then,wine is dedicated to the deities.The Ker festival is not accompanied by the dance and music, but the ceremony is rounded off by a feast.

PUJAS ASSOCIATED WITH MARRIAGE AND BIRTH ETC.

Although the anthropologists like Lewine and Risley are sought to prove that there is no particular religious ceremony related to marriage of the Riangs,but I like to say that there are religious ceremonies related with the marriage ceremony of the Riangs.The rituals consist of TUYABUMA AND SANGRAN.The Tuyabuma puja is held on the bank of a stream or river when a chiken, cotton thread, undried rice and fruits are offered to the deities.The Aouchai is engaged to perform the puja.The greatest spirit of the mountain has to be propitiated as SANGRANG by sacrificing animals and eggs.It is difficult to understand how Dr.Gan Choudhuri has come to the conclusion that Sangrangma is a Goddess. Dr.Gan Choudhuri has given a statement elsewhere that Sangrang is the husband of TOOIMA(Tuyabuma).We like to say that Sangrangma has been coined from two tribal words SANGRANG and MA.SANGRANG is the nature deity of the mountain and Ma specially denotes the deity of water.Tuyabuma as the wife of Sangrang.

The Backak kama, kebeng buma,Abu suma,khongkhonk kama and khangkachang khangmo etc puja are observed for the welfare of the baby.The fowls, prawn and several leaves of the trees are needed as the offerings of the deities.The Riangs observe the rice feeding ceremony in which a special puja is held for the welfare of the child.

A special from of worship has to be followed when the baby is grown up and fit for wearing cloth.Seven gurdian deities of Witches are propitiated by sacrificing a pig, four fowls and two bottles of wine.The Aouchai is allowed to conduct the puja.The seven deities of the Witches are as followes:

1.KANGSARI
2.NAKTI
3. HANGARI
4.TUICHHI
5.BANGBARI
6.KCHHAMTUI
7.KACHAKTUI

The Riangs deities have no anthropomorphic form or human form of divine body, so the symbolic representations are made with the green bamboo poles like the Tipras, in front of which the offerings are dedicated in the names of the deities.The places for the worship are generally selected out side the houses but a few cases the worship are held in the houses viz, the RANGTOUK puja and NAKCHUMA puja.

One should remember that the pujas and festivals of the Tribals are communal in nature and each family has to contribute money which is called KHAIN.The surplus collection of KHAINS is spent on welfare of the society.Such religious festivals are almost rounded up with meeting of the tribal chiefs.In such a meeting political, social and religious matters of important are discussed and necessary steps are taken to come to a solution.The most of the Kakbarak speaking tribes of Tripura worship LAMPRA OWATHAP(AKHITRA RAJA AND BHIKITRA RAJA are jointly called Lampra).The Riangs pay reverence to the LAMPRA OWATHAP in the beginning of all social and religious ceremonies.The Aouchai is engaged to perform the Hasplema puja to cure a minor illness while the Jhunairou puja is performed to cure a patient from the serious disease.The worship of ancestors is the common identity among all primitive tribe-

s.Faith in the invisible ancestors is found among the Riangs.There are three kinds of ancestors worship,namely:
(a) Brokskami (b) Kothainami (c) Lukhlaimi

(a) BROKSAKAMI:

In this system of worship,the dead body of a man is first washed with water,after such bath he or she is dressed in cloth when a fowl is sacrificed in front of the feet of the dead body by the Aouchai who chants the mantras in times of worshiping as follows:
"NUNG AYAU KURAI ANGAI THUKHAI THUKHAN AHAYA ANGIRA KO AYAMAYA APAGAYA NAN BUTHARI LANGKHMAI BAI LAKCHHATUIN BUTHAR GAKTHUN"(59) (If your time is up and as a result of it you have faced death O,K,but if you are killed by any body worngly,he will have to die like this fowl.)
Afterwards,an earthen pot filled with dried rice and cooked meat is offered to the soul of the dead person.The pot is placed at the feet of the deceased and the ritual is followed by a dance through out the night.The dead body is brunt in the next morning usually near a river or a stream.

(b KOTHAINAINI:

It is an anuual ritual connected with the dead.LAOTOK or soul of the deceased remains under the control of Sisi manji, the son of BURAHA for a year and it is said that Sisi manji is the protector of soul.On the day of Kathainaini, the widow sister of the father offers dried rice,dried meat, fish, fruits, and wine in the name of Laotok and Sisi manji on the Simang-nak .Then, taking the brunt bones from the Simang-nak they go to the Charinak.A Charinak is a rectanguler shaped hut.However, the elder sister begins to cry holding the brunt bone's bandle in the charinak when a drum is beated and the ritual of dance and drinking of wine continue for a few hours.In front of the Charinak a banana leaf is placed

and a branch of green bamboo along with its leaves is planted in the groung.The brunt bones are placed under the planted bamboo and the dried rice,curry and cloth are dedicated to the Laotok. Moreover, a pig is sacrificed and the blood is sprayed on the bone. In the evening the brunt bone is carried by them when a drum is beated rythemically. Placing the brunt bones on the middle of the courtyard, all of them are engaged in dancing around the brunt bones and they are entertained with food and wine.This type of dancing ritual continues for the whole night.

The next morning the AICHUKHTHAKATHAM! ceremony is observed in which the relatives of the deceased have to sacrifice a fowl and the meat of the sacrificial animal are cooked along with rice.The dried rice and cooked meat are placed on a banana leaf as the offerings for Laotok.Then the bundle of bones is carried to the Chrainak.The assembled women give a bottle of wine according to their tradition when male persons give money to it.The dancing and drinking ceremony is ended after a few hours and a man bears the bundle of the bones and another man follows him with a green bamboo pipe which contains cooked meat, dried rice, cooked fish and wine.The brunt bone is immersed into the river along with this green bamboo pipe.In this connection it may be noted that another ritual for the purification of house is observed on the next day and the worship of the Tuyabuma and Sangrang is performed by sacrificing a fowl.(60)

The riligious culture of the Riangs is similar to the Tipras.The Aouchai of the Riangs chants the mantras in his own dialect in times of puja.According to Dr.Gan Choudhuri,the deities are invited by the mantras and the purpose of the invitation is also informed to them.The requests are made by the Aouchai to the deity to come,to sit and wash the body like human being.The Aouchai washes the sacrificial animal and he completely severs the necks of animal in case of a higher deity and the blood is sprayed on the symbolic representation of the deity.According to the character of the deity pigeon, duck , pig and wine are also offered. Last of all the deity is humbly requested to bless his/her devotees and cure the patient soon. Final request of the Aouchai to the deity is that

the deity should go back to HARIHAONAKHAO(the land of deities) with all misfortunes of the earth.

PUJAS OF THE RIANGS:

YEARLY HOUSEHOLD PUJAS:

1.Barai Poin taingmo.
2.Kati haroug poin taingmo.
3.Sainairou poin taingmo.
4.Noura Khamo.
5.Mai Khlungomo.
Khumchak Kaimo.
6.Chhamung maingmo.
7.Matai Katarmamo msi taimgmo.

AFTER PREGNANCY:-

1.Fbong bumo.

BEFORE BIRTH PAIN

1.Tai Chauma.
2.Taiyo Jaudwari rimo.

AFTER BIRTH:-

1.Abu Sumo
2.Backak kamo.
3.Khongkhouk Kamo.
4.Khang Kchang Khangmo.

TO WELCOME GUEST:

1.Tai Choumo. 2.Kbing bumo. 3.Kati Chamo.

TREATMENT:

1.Tai Chaumo .2.Buraha. 3.Ha Splemo. 4.Thunai Rou-.5.Jam Dwari.6.Banirou Poin Kchak taingmo. 7.Touma Ksam rimo.

COMMUNITY PUJA:

1.Para Dermo.

GODS/DEITIES ETC.

1.Buraha. 2. Banirou. 3.Matai Katarma. 4.Sri Sukundarai.5.Bukundarai. 6.Kalabang. 7.Kaala Bang. 8.Mainoukhma.9.Khunoukhma.10. Tuiyabuma

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS OF THE NOATIAS:

The pujas and festivals of the Noatias bear a close resemblance to those of the Tipras.The Noatias believe one Supreme God MATAIKATAR, the creator of the world who in course of time has been identified as SIBRAI. They believe that there exists an invisible relationship between the deities and the living men.Besides the Mataikatar,the Noatias recognise a good number of nature deities,spirits and ancestors like the other tribes of Tripura.The religion of the Noatias seems to have a peculiar blending of naturism, animism, animatism, fertility cult along with ancestor worship and Brahmanism.The kingdom of nature deities, spirits and ancestors of the Noatias consist of as follows:

(A) MATAIKATAR : SUPREME SUPERNATURALGOD
(B) MATAIKATARMA :WIFE OF MATAIKATAR

TREATMENT:

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NATURE DEITIES:

(A)The God of the sky :BIKBITRA
(B)The God of the Mountain: SANGRANG
(C) The God of the Earth :MAILOOMA
(D) The God of the Water :TUIMA
(E) The God of the Sea :AKHATRA
(F) The God of the Tree :KHOLOOMA

BELOW THE RANK OF THE NATURE DEITIES:

(A) The spirit of the Ancestor:KALAIA
(B) The spirit of the Wor, fertility and wealth : GARIA.
(C) The tutelary spirit of the Family :NAKCHUMATAI
(D) The spirit of the Forest : HAICHUKMA
(E) The spirit of the barrenness of woman : SIRIJUDU
(F) The spirit of Death :THUMNAIRAK
(G) The spirit of the disease : BURASA .

The Noatias have deep rooted belief in the power of nature deities,spirits and ancestors.It has been noticed that the disease,femine, scarcity of watar, low fertility of soil and human, low production of crops and human beings, high incidence of death etc, all these are happen when the nature deities and the spirits(good or evil) are not properly propitiated and sacrifices are not made to them in due time.

LAMPRA PUJA:

The purpose of the Lampra puja of the Noatias is analogous to the other tribes of Tripura.Akhatra and Bikbitra,the benevolent deities are worshipped regularly

at the family level whenever necessary. Usually, the Lampra puja has to be performed on the occasions such as marriage, house inauguration, rice feeding ceremony, Goria puja, Ker puja and beginning of all social and religious ceremonies.The deities of Lampra puja have to be propitiated by sacrificing animals and eggs along with several offerings.(61).

TUIMA PUJA:

The nature deity Tuima as the goddess of water is worshipped who looks after the welfare of the member within a certain individual household and community also. It is said that when offerings and sacrifices are not made to the water Goddess Tuima, she changes her role and brings in disease,death, failure of crops, accident and such other calamities for the family or the village. The Tuima puja is generally celebrated once a year and the villagers of a Noatia community arrange this expensive puja by raising a fund. The Tuima puja may be called a ritual for everybody's affairs. The Tuima puja is arranged by the side of a river or a stream near to a tribal village or para.On the appointed day, the symbolic representation of the deity is made with the aid of green bamboo poles.A platform raises up on the water level; on the middle of the platform an owathap is prepared.Chanting the mantras the Ochai sacrifices he-goats,pigeons and eggs and the puja is rounded off with a big feast in which the villagers take active part.

KER PUJA:

The sacred and important Ker puja is celebrated during the month of Phalgun- Chaitra by the Noatias in every year for the welfare of the village peoples.(62). It is already narrated in the foregoing pages that the worship of the spirit of water as the Goddess Tuima gains ground among the tribes of Tripura and the Noatias are also following this holy ritual even before the arrival of Brahmanical religión. Besides Tuima, a good number of nature deities, spirits and ancestors are propitiated in the Ker ritual.The offerings to LAMPRA,GARIA,NAKRI-,BURASA,MAILOOMA, KHOLOOMA,SANGRA-NG,THUMNAIRAK,BANIRAK,SIRIJUMDU, BA-LANG, DUHARI, POHARI, BUKHUKCINIRAK,neces-sarily involve the sacrifice of he-goats, chikens,du-cks,pigeons,eggs,wine and Langi(rice beer) to satisfy them.The deities of the Ker Puja are worshipped on symbolic representations which are constructed by the green bamboo poles and planted in the ground by the Ochai.

When the Ker puja is performed for the material success in collective life of a village, a series of taboos follow it. One of the taboos suspends all movements outside the village till the ending of the ritual .No man is to be allowed to leave the village as long as the ritual continues.

GARIA PUJA:

The Garia puja might have been begun and observed at a much earlier period.The Noatias pay reverence to Garia on the last day of Chaitra which lasts for seven days.(63). The Noatias maintain a common code of system to contruct the symbolic representation of the deity with the aid of the green bamboo-pole tied with a white thread of cotton and a richna around it. The

Ochai conducts the ritual and sacrifices he-goats, pigeons,ducks, eggs to the deity. The other ingredients of the Garia puja consist of fruits,wine and langi.
At about 3,30 p.m. the symbolic representation of the deity is carried to the selected houses of the scheduled village.The companions of Garia are received by the house holder earnestly.They move from house to house with the symbol of the deity while the drum is beaten rythemically along with song and dance.To ensure the happiness of the family, the offering to the deity is made by sacrificing chikens,fowls and eggs by the house holder.This type of joyful ceremony continues for seven days and seven nights.At the end of the ritual on the last day, the bamboo made symbol of the deity is immersed in the water of river or stream.

OTHER PUJAS:

The religious rites and rituals as well as beliefs and practices of the Noatias bear a close resemblance to those of the Tipras.They have been following old habits and religious beliefs of the Tipras in their day to day life. The Noatias believe in a good number of deities like the Tipras.They worship these deities sometimes individually and some time collectively whenever necessity arises. The names of the deities of the Noatias as follows:

BURASA, NAKCHUMATAI, MAILOOMA, KHOLOOMA,AKHTRA, BIKHATRA, TUIMA,SANGRANG, MATAIKATAR, MATAIKATARMA, KALAIA,SAKLAMATAI,BANIRAK, CHHAKALJOOK, HAICHUKMA, SIRIIUMDU, SIRIJADU, LONGTHARI, DUMBUR,GOMATI, THUMNAIRAK, DOHARI, POHARI,GARIA and so on.

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS OF JAMATIAS:

It should be mentioned here that whole in terms of religion the Jamatias may be called Hindus, no doubt,but the traditional religion of the jamatias had been long commonly described as animism by the conventional anthropologists.A remarkable thing with the Jamatias, considering from primitive period to the present,is that they are secular minded.It appears that the Jamatias have without doubt been drawn into the main stream of Brahmanical way of life. They are not to be called animist who are still dogmatic to follow their conventional tribal rituals and practices.

They rever MATAI KATAR, the chief deity of the Kakbarak speaking tribes of Tripura as the creator of the universe.Besides,they pay homage to AKATHA,BIKATHA,TWYBUK,SANGRANG, SUKUNDRAY, TWYSWKALTA MWNG, BUKHUK SINI (seven sisters i,e,Dakini, Jogini,Mogini, Khagini,L-ohari,Prohori, Premsori) GARIA,MAYLWNGMA, NAKSU,BURASA, BWRWYROG, MWY LANMWNG OR TWY MANKERMWNG, KUWAYCHANAYMA, SONGOTRAN and others.

From the investigation of the mysticism prevalent in the worship of the Supernatural deities of the Jamatias,it is found that the indigenous religious life of the Jamatias centred round the worship of traditional deities for obtaining immediate results.The offering to a certain deity is to be made for the welfare of the child and mother during pregnancy.Shri P.N.Bhattacharya says that" at the fifth month of pregnancy, a religious function named KATHEUW is performed to ensure

easy and safe birth.The puja is to be performed in the morning and evening.The morning performance is called AYCHUK KATHEUW, and the evening perfo-rmance is called SARIYKATHEUW.Generally a duck is sacrificed in this puja."(64). The name of the deity of this puja has not been given by him. In connection with the droping of umbilical cord of the baby this ritual is performed again.The offering to TWYSWKAL TAMWNG necessarily involves the sacrifice of chikens,he-goats and eggs.The nature deity of the water has been identified as TWYSWKAL TAMWNG who has to be propitiated for safety of the child. To protect the child from the evil influence of the malevolent spirits, a ritual is arranged in which seven deities of the witches are adored in the name of BUKHUKSINIROK puja. "If the breast milk of mother does not appear within five days of delivery an Ochai is engaged to conduct this ritual. The name of the seven sisters are DAKINI,JOGINI,MOGINI,KHAGINI,LOHARI, PRA-HARI and PREMSORI."(65). In this ceremony seven cakes are prepared with the powder of rice and an amount of water is added to some powder and stried to look like milk.Then this white mixture is bolied in a pot and cakes are dropped into it. This liquid and the cakes are offered as naibadya in the name of the seven deities.(66). The offering to SIRI JAMDU and SIRI JADU is mainly made in expectation of a baby from a barren woman.The ritual of these deities is called TWYSA.BAAUW whidh commonly performed in a TWYSA(canal) by the Ochay on behalf of the house holder.The fowls, eggs and fruits are offered to the deities in presence of seven persons.

Another ritual known as "CHOUDDA DEVATA PUJA" has to be observed by sacrificing he-goats,pigeons,ducks,and eggs to receive blessing for the bride and the groom at the time of marriage.The fourteen bamboo poles with a few branches and leaves on the top are planted in the ground as the symbolic representations of the deities.The ancestor worship are prevalent in the Jamatia society.The system of worship of the dead body is that "before lighting the funeral pyre cooked rice is offered to the dead body with the curry of fish,egg or meat of pigeon"(67). It may be noted that on the next day the brunt bones of the dead body are taken out and put into a bamboo pipe or tube.Afterwards, it is "placed in the courtyard surrounded by a covered fencing.The enclosed space is called bari."(68). The collected pieces of brunt bones are worshipped by offering food daily till the Sradha ceremony is held.

In the sphare of religion, as well as in all matters of religious culture in general, the Jamâtias are indebted to the Kakbarak speaking tribes of Tripura.The rites ,rituals, beliefs and parctices of the Kakbarak speaking tribes have close affinity among those of each other, through they have their own individual characteristics as is usualy seen with pujas on almost every occasions. Although the Jamatias have accepted either Vaishnavism or Saktism, yet they are worshipping the nature deities,spirits, and ancestors. The benevolent deities like AKATHA,BIKATHA, TWYBUK, SUKUMDRAY, MUKUNDRAY are propitiated at different statges of their life such as birth, rice feeding ceremony marraige,death and so on.(69).

RONDOK PUJA:

The deities of the jamatias generally associated with the land and agriculture. The nature deities who preside over the paddy and cotton of the hilly region are worshipped as MAYLWNGMA and KHULWNGMA. So that there will be no crisis of fooding and clothing.Besides this animistic belief, the traces of animatism is also related to the worship of these deities .The most notable fact is that the deities cited above have no specific form or shape.The symbols of the deities are peculiar, two earthen pots cntained with newly undried rice are decorated with the rice powder and vermillion on the tops of which some pabbles are kept.And the garlands of cotton thread are fastened to them while these are placed in a house.These two earthen pots are called RONDOK which seem to be appeared as the symbolic representations of both the deities. This ritual is observed twice in a year viz, before the Goria puja and on the newly rice eating festival,MWYTANMWNG OR TWYMANKERMWNG PUJA.

The Jamatias adore the deity of water in the rivers. They believe that their life is full of constant fear of the countless malignant spirits and deities of the different rives. The Jamatias conceive and name the deity of river as TWYMANKERMWNG OR MWYTANMWNG who is basically benevolent and gives life, health and properties to the Jamatias.They also believe that when timely offerings and sacrifices are not made to the river deity,she changes her role and brings in disease, death and such other calamities for the family or the village. The Twymankermwng puja is performed by the Jamatia

villagers or individual householder."The puja which is held in luku level is known Luku Samwng and the puja which is performed by house holder level is called Mkhung Samwng."(70). The Jamatias arrange this ritual collectively in the sacred rivers of Tripura.The names of the rivers in which the Jamatias pay reverence are as follows:

(a) Gomati river
(2) Bijoy river
(3) Khowai River

Besides,the other rivers and streams are also selected for the ritual.The sacrifices being made on the community level are expensive. The expensive animal like buffalo is purchased by subscription raised from all the families of the Jamatia villages. At some places we have noticed that the offering of betelnut and betel-leaves have been also included owing to the Hindu influence.From the religious point of view the Ochai offers all the sacrifices chanting the mantras as an incharge of all the religious responsibilities.

NAKSU MATAI PUJA:

Generally tribal communities of Tripura are not worshipper of the snake,but according to another type of opinion,the Jamatias along with the other tribes of Tripura like to identify NAKCHUMATAI as the goddess of snake.(71). It is accepted by some community that Nakchumatai is believed to be the embodiment of Hindu influence, though I have no prof of it, I can not help suspecting its existence in the hilly region of Tripura.

It is not extremely difficult in the present state of our knowledge to say that the worship of bamboo(bambusa arudinaea, petz) is traceable in the folk religious ceremony of Bengal where bamboo is the symbol of the Vastu devata(72) or the God of residential house who is said to be the deity of dwelling house as a guardian.The Supernatural deity who presides over the house according to the belief of the

Jamatias, may be compared to the vastu-devata of the bangalees.It is significant fact that a snake is also a vastudeva-ta who dwells in the boundary of a Bangalee house holder whom they respect. It is a crime of them to kill a Vastusarpa. However,the scheduled date for the worship of Nakchumatai is Chaitra sankranti. On the selected day the green bamboos are hacked into pieces and the Ochai makes the YAMPHRA which is a squared like symbol representing the deity Nakchu-matai.

The YAMPHRA is placed on the ground near the east-sou-thern corner of the house, over which a holy white cloth is also placed.The four OWAPHI(bamboo strips) are planted in the ground at the four corner of Yamphra.A canopy is adjusted with the strips.The ceremonial worship of the deity is conducted by the Ochai who sacrifices a pig or a fowl.The other offerings needed for this ritual are langi(rice-bear), bottle wine and dried meat of the sacrificial animal.

BURASA, KUWAYCHANAYMA, BWRWYROG AND NAKRI PUJA:

The Jamatias believe that they have been surviving on the mercy of the nature deities, spirits and ancestors. They causes pain, fever etc, to the children, spread the disease all over the village and such other calamities, the reason of which is only known to the Ochai. BURASA, KUWAYCHANAMA and BWRWYRIG are malevolent deities who are worshipped to cure the patients. The Jamatias are very afraid of the Burasa and they strongly believe that a proper worship is essential to ward off the influence of the evil eye of Burasa like the Tipras and others. They have an idea that whenever Burasa gets a chance, he harms the Jamatias individual. BURASA, the evil spirit, generally, lives in and around the forest, near a stream, on some isolated bamboos and the road crossing of a tribal village. At the level of observation when one finds a chance to see the ritual of Burasa, he comes across a certain symbol constructed by bamboo poles, as the

representation of Burasa. When a child is suffered from any pain or fever, the offering to Burasa is made out side the village for the welfare of the child.

KUWHYCHANAYMA, is said to be a wife of Burasa who possesses a powerful influence owing to her natural force to cuase disease and to hide an animal. The Jamatias believe that the blood of the sacrificial animal is secred as it pacifies the deity of good and evil spirit living in and around the village. So they propitiate the deity by sacrificing two black fowls or a pig for the removal of the evil influence.

The supernatural belief of the Jamatias is reflected in the witchcraft. They believe that a CHHAKAL (witch) is a malignant creature and she may bring seven evil spirits. They are called BWRWYRAK. They are seven sisters, the guardian deities of witches who bring about disease, death, failure of crops and other calamities. The witches compel the seven deities to cause harm to any human being whenever they desire. In the Jamatia community the Ochai find out the cause of disease and then through his spell and suitable sacrifices he drives the Bwrwyrak's influence from the patient appeasing them. The Ochai adores the deities by sacrificing a pig, seven fowls and eggs. Besides, the cooked meat of the sacrificial animal along with dried rice and wine are offered to the deities. Generally, the deities are paid reverence outside the village in the evening. A taboo is strictly observed that the offerings given to the deities should not be taken to any body's house and the woman and children are not allowed to attend the ritual.

GARIA PUJA FESTIVAL:

Garia is a common word for the Jamatias as well as the Kakbarak speaking tribes of Tripura. This word is used to denote a benevolent spirit as the powerful nature deity who gives life, wealth, fertility and strength of wor to the Jamatias. In order to live a happy and peacefull life the blessing of Garia is essentially needed. In the previous pages we have described

about the Garia as a deity of wor, a deity of fertility and a deity of properties and peace. However, the Garia puja is basically begins at the last day of the month of Chaitra which continues for 7(seven) days.

It is Mataybalnay's responsibility to raise 'Kain' (subscription) from the peoples of the Jamatias living in the different villages according to the decision of the hoda. In the annual conference of the hoda, the place of the puja is selected; there is no definite village or place in which every year the puja may be performed.

Generally, on the 15th day of Magh or before, the annual conference of the hoda is held some where in a Jamatia village and the arrangement for the puja is started. On the hoda level, the following officials are selected from the religious point of view for the purpose of the ritual in the annual conference.

(a) KHERFANG: He is a respected person who adores the Garia deity for the whole year in his house. It is a Hereditary post who preserves the head of the Biyagwnag Garia along

with all other ritualistic articles associated with the Garia puja, in addition to that the annual puja have to be performed in the Kherfang's house. Another Kherfang is also selected by the annual conference of the hode for the same purpose.

(b) OCHAY: The chief priest of the hoda of the Jamatia community is called Ochay or Ochai.

(c) MATAY BALNAY: It is their responsibility to raise subscriptions for the Garia puja. They carry the symbolical representation of the deity Garia (Biyagwnang) to the scheduled villages.

(d) DORIYA: They create holy sound by beating the drum during the Garia ritual.

(e) BOGLA: The companion of the deity Garia is called Bogla.

(f) BHANDARI: The storekeeper of the Garia puja.

For the construction of the symbolical representation of Garia a group of people consisting six persons, usually go to the hilly area to collect three green bamboos. At the time of cutting the bamboo they perform a special rite which is called Patkarna. Afterwards, the prominent bamboo is given the offerings and it is taken by a single stroke of the takkal controling breath devotionally by one of the cutters. The other two bamboos are collected as usually. These are carried to the coutyard of the kherfang where the puja is held and the chief of the Matay balnay identifies the "Rajabansh" when he cuts two bamboos to make two bamboo poles measuring 3 mtr. 29 cm. in height. These poles are separated into pieces. The 'Rajabansh' (Owithuifang) is fastened with white thread of cotton along with a Riya or Richha as a symbolical representation of Garia (Biyakwrwy). The symbolic representation of Biyagwnang Garia is made by a bamboo pole which has already been cut by the Matay-balnay. A golden head image is placed on the top of the bamboo ploe in which limbs of the deity are adjusted with the pieces of bamboo. In this way the symbolic representation of the Biyagwnang Garia is made.

There are more than one legend current in the Jamatias about the Biyagwnang Garia which point out the antiquity of the

arrival of this type of Garia in Tripura. The legenda are follows: According to Sri Tapan Dutta, the worship of Biyagwnang Garia began from 111 Tripurabda. Mr. Dutta provides information about the folk story of Purbanara. It is said that the Biyagwnang Garia was adored by the Kukis of Mizoram, but Garia was unhappy. One night, Purbanara, the commander in chief of the Army of Tripura received an order from the Biyagwnagn Garia to rescue him from the hands of the Kukis. The regiment of Purbanara consisted of the Tipra soldiers, Riang-soldiers, Achlong- soldiers, and Jamatia-soldiers. Purbanara mobilized armed forces for the conquest of Mizoram. The Mizoes were defeated by the army of purbanara and it was purbanara, commander in chief, who is said to have brought the Biyagwnang Garia from the Mezoram accompanied by the regiments of Tripura.(73). It has been also believed that the tribal communities who had taken part in the expedition of Mezoram, equeally shared the symbolic representations of the deity as follows:

Names of community	Symbol
Riangs	A spear
Tipras	A green bamboo pole
Achlongs	A falchion
Jamatias	A visage

According to another version of the legend of the Biyagwnang Garia it appears that the Biyagwnang Garia was brought by a hero from NAGALIKE (Naga land). The original deity who is called Biyakwruwy Garia possesses only one hand. He becomes less popular in the Jamatia society when Biyagwnang Garia takes the prominent place as a younger brother of Garia.

The pandal and alter of the Garia are made by the green bamboo poles and these are decorated with the hand made richha, white sheet of cloths, Dhutis and cotton threads. It is very significant that a trident is planted in the ground at of 45 cm. away from the symbol of the deity along with twenty others tridents weighing about 10 kg. These tridents measure 3.64 mtr. to 4.09 mtr. in height. Two white threads

jointly make a boundary line from the tridents to a small wooden enclosure for the animal sacrifice. It is a taboo that no body is allowed to trespass the boundary line during the ritual, but the Matay balnay, Ochai and Doriya are permitted to enter into this area. Just before the animal sacrifice, the said area is purified by the Ochai, Matay balnay and the Doriya in three times with the help of secrad water. An image of Garia is made with the undried rice powder by the Matay balnay and Ochai and the image is placed on a wooden made seat (pira). Afterwards, the offering to the deity is made in front of this image. Besides, the offering to bamboo made symbolical representation of Garia is given. This symbol of Garia is handed over to the Matay balnay by the Ochai and the Matay balnay holds it by his hands when he spurns on the earth in three times and declears, " Now it belong to me." Then he places it on his shoulder and comes near to the Kherfang. The Matay balnay circumambulates in a clockwise manner around the BANCHAY. Next, the symbol is placed near the Bangchay. Before the sacrifice is begun, the Ochai kherfang, Matay balnay, Dariya akra and two chiefs of the Jamatia society are supposed to wash the Garia with eggs and water.

If one observes the cycle of Garia puja, he notices the sacrifices being made both on the hoda and on the family level. The first sacrifice is made by the hoda and the sacrifices of buffalo and he-goats are normally made over by the hoda. The bufalos and he-goats are not usually sacrificed by the family. The Jamatias in making these sacrifices believe that this type of sacrifices are essential for the welfare of their society as a whole. Thus, the first part of the Garia puja is over.

Biyagwnang Garia's symbol is carried from the house to house, village to village, by the Matay balnay. He is accompanied by the Doriyas, companions of Garia Boglas and Paglas, Mohanta and Ochai. The house holders of the village have to be received the Garia party. The companions of the Garia are offered fowls, eggs, money etc. The Matay balnay and

Ochai bless the house holder on behalf of the deity. During the tour, the companions of the Garia begin to sing and dance for a few minutes with the sound of the drums. The songs are partly erotic in nature. However, the boglas create jokes with their companions and the spectators in times of the movement of Garia. The chief of the boglas, Mahanta acts as a shaman if he is requested by some body to cure a patient. It has been known to us that the patient gets cured by the shamannistic activities of the Mohanta. This type of tour is performed by the companions of Garia for seven days and nights. After the seven days and nights are over, the deity has to be propitiated by sacrificing he-goats, pigeon, undried rice and fruits.

Before immersion of the bamboo made symbol of the deity the Ochai declears the result of the puja and the Matay balnay requests all to immerse the symbolical representation of the deity. Then, the symbol of the deity is immersed in the river or stream.

KER PUJA FESTIVAL:

The Jamatias traditionally revere a group of deities and the spirits during the Ker puja like the Tipras and the other tribes of Tripura. It is very difficult to ascertain the antiquity of the Ker puja. The religion of the Jamatias is more or less confind to the animism and belief in the Supernatural deities. The custom of making an emblance of deity with the help of bamboo poles, is current in the Jamatias like the other tribes of the world. They believe the world to be peopled by the Supernatural powers who are the responsible for all diseases and disasters. The object of the Ker puja of the Jamatias seems to propitiate the Supernatural deities or forces. At the same time, each village or community seem to have been under the protection of the two special spirits,who are the guardian deities of the village or community.

one of them is the deity and the another is the messenger of death news. Thus, it appears that the Ker puja is observed according to tribal beliefs and practices to secure the people from disease, epidemic and disasters which may cause harm to a hoda or a village. As with the study of sacred Ker puja we have noted that the Jamatias have four types of Ker puja as follows:(74).

(A) SAON PUJA
(B) AGAN PUJA
(C) CHITRA CHEYNGGWRA
(D) BISESH KER PUJA

The system of these Ker pujas combine various ideas and customos which evidently belong to agriculture and pastoral community. At the same time it has been found quite natural that the ultimate origin of various rites, practices and beliefs of the Ker puja may be traced further back to a nomadic shifting cultivation stage of the society. There can be nodoubt, however, that in the earlist form of wirship current in Tripura, the alliance between the Supernatural world and the divine essence is extremely intimate.

'Saonpuja' is performed by the hoda (community leve organisation) for disasters and diseases. 'Agan puja' is observed for the welfare of the Jhumias in the hoda also. 'Chaitra cheynggwra puja has to be observed to propitiate the deities and to avert epidemics and other calamities.

A deep study of popular pujas like the Kerpuja plays a great role in maintaining the unity of the village folk. There are several taboos connected with the Ker puja. During the Ker puja, the Ochai is all in all and his decision can not be changed in the question of taboos. These are the taboos of the Ker puja as follows:

(1) No one is to given permission to leave the village and no outsider is allowed to enter the village. But, just after the puja is over any body may be allowed to trespass the village and

no one be disallowed to leave the village.
(2) According to some Ochai, the taboos mentioned above will remain in operation for a period of three days.
(3) These taboos will last for a full day only.
However, the decision of the Ochai is accepted by all.
Other taboos:
A. No one is allowed to sleep in the village and spend night out side the village as long as the taboos last. No outsider may be permitted to sleep in the village.
B. The villagers are not expected to come out of their house as long as the puja lasts and they should not go outside of the house for daily work.
C. No body is allowed to husk paddy or to wash his cloth or to light an oven or to cut a tree.
The green bamboos are considered sacred as they are essential materials for the preparation of the symbolical representation of the deities. The bamboo poles, bamboo pieces and various form of the bamboo strips are used to make specific symbol according to the character of the deities; they are differ from one to another in the designs and sizes as per instructions of the Ochai.
The ceremonial worship of the Ker puja is observed in the morning on the saturday or tuesday. The articles needed for the ritual are Undried rice, fruits, suger, pigeons, ducks, eggs, he-goats, turmeric, vermillion and mustered seeds etc. Generally, the sacrifice of blood is not offered by the Vaishnab devotees now-a-days.

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS OF THE UCHAI:

Gustav Jahodais of opining that the people may perform certain ritual acts in order to ensure in their under taking or ward off some danger.(75). In the stage of human cultural development during the primitive period they come to blive in the natural power as civilized men. They thought deeply that the climate, disease, death or production of crops were depended to the Supernatural power. The primitive man

thought that a body of any individual was controled by a soul. and the incidents of the universe were brought to light by the Supernatural powers as the deities. The soul of individual leads them to understand that each object of the world possesses a spirit or a soul or a power. The special action of the material objects is always causing natural calamities and diseases. In this way, the sky the earth, the river etc, are adored to bring about desired results bacause they have magical power or divine power to do good ro evil to human being and the religion of the primitive people are centred around these deities from which the pujas and festivals are evolved.

There are great similarities between the religious beliefs, rites, rituals and ceremonies of the Uchais and the Riangs. Sri Shyamlal Debbarma's opinion is that the rituals of the Tipras, Riangs, Jamatias, Kalais, and Noatias are similar to the Uchais. (76). They are not free from animism, animatism, magic and fertility rites. At present although the Uchais claim to be the followers of Hindism, from their beliefs and religious rites it is presumed that they are still dogmatic to follow their indigenous tribal religious behaviour patterns.

In the Uchoi society there is a hereditory belief of nature dieties and spirits who preside over them. Like the Akas they believe that the Supernatural powers are needed offerings to remain satisfied. Many interesting rites and rituals of the Uchois are associated with the cultivation of Jhum. The propitiation of the spirit of the Jhum follows soon after the selection of the place of Jhum is over. Usually, a fowl is sacrificed for the ocassion. The offering to MAIFANG KHUFANG is made when the first harvasting starts by sacrificeing a fowl. The Maipum puja involves the sacrifice of a fowls on the last day of the harvesting. Two Goddesses essentially look after the welfare of the house-hold as mailima and Khuluma. They have to be kept perfectly appeased by sacrificing fowls and newly rice in the Rantak puja to celebrate the Maikatal (newly rice eating festival). The adoration of the deities of the Rantak puja is also made during

Lakshmi purnima.

Another important puja is known as Tuyachaumi(77) has to be observed by sacrificing a fowl to ensure the birth of a child. The Akchai conducts the ritual and sacrifices fowl. As soon as the child is five months old, the Bagcha puja (78) is arranged for the child so that he may stand and move freely. The fowl, Butuk (rice beer) and Arok are offered by the Akchai on behalf of the performer of ritual. Formerly, the Kebeng Bumi puja has to be performed at the time of cloth wearing ceremony of a thirteen years old boy. This ritual is also followed by them on the occasion of Richha wearing by a girl who has attained youth. The Goddess of river, according to the Uchais is the mother goddess who is called Tuima. She looks after the happiness, peace and prosperity when appeased in the right way, bless the Uchais. The offering of buffalo, he-goats and fruits have to made to the deity by the Akchai on behalf of the performers. The Ker puja has to be performed once in a year by a village collectively for the safety of the village. This ritual is observed in open courtyard of the head of a village called Choudhuri, generally, in the month of Agrahayana. The ritual is followed by the successive taboos. As soon as the Ker puja starts, the taboos are brought into operation. No person is allowed to enter the village or no one is given permission to leave the village. This restraint lasts for about a few hours only after which the aspirant may be permitted to go his routine. The Akchai conducts the ritual and sacrifices pigeons ducks, eggs, he-goats to satisfy the deities.

The ritual is rounded off with a big feast in which the entire village takes part,. The meat o-f the sacrificed animal and wine are properly served among the villagers in a delightfull environment. Another deity who specially protects the Uchais from snake bitting, is known as NAKCHU MATAI. Similarly, she protects the households from all kinds of diseases and disasters. The offering to Nakchumatai necessarily involves the sacrifice of a pig or afowl. The emblematic representations of the deities of the Uchais are made with green bamboo

poles or stone or earthen pots.

PUJA AND FESTIVALS OF THE RUPINIS:

The Rupinis of the state of Tripura belong to a sub-tribe of the Halam. The Rupinis along with other sub-tribes of the Halam community have not yet been forgotton their ancient religion with the comming of Hindus or Buddhists to Tripura. They never forget some beliefs and rituals which are associated with Magic, fetishism, totemism, animatism, animism, fertility cult and witch-craft. In the Rupini society, there is a hierarchy of nature deities and spirits and ancestors who rule over them as the forces of nature and pervade the religious thought. The deities of nature cast an influence over the Rupinis, therefore, the nature deities, spirits and ancestors have to be appeased in various ways at different times so that they bless the Rupinis with happiness and peace.

The Rupinis have their own system of puja which starts from the pregnancy of the mother and to ensure the birth of a promising baby and to save the mother life. The Lampra puja and Ganga puja have to be propitiated accompenied with prayer and sacrifices. Like the other Kakbarak speaking tribes, the Rupinis offer ingredients to HACHUNGNU or HICHUKMA. The ingredients consist of pig, chikens and eggs. The economic activities of the Rupinis related to Jhum cultivation and it is closly associated with magical rites and beliefs. The BURASA or BURADEVATA puja is arrenged for an increase in crops. On any wednesday or thrusday the offerings with invocation and sacrifices of chikens and pigs are made in the granary.

TOOIMA is not supreme deity, but she gives bumper crops, peace and prosperity. She is benign and the highest offering has to be made to her. The sacrifice of buffalo along with a he-goat are offered to satisfy her as the deity of water.

They perform the Randhak puja for two nature deities who are called MAILOOMA (deity of rice) and KHULOOMA (deity of cotton). After the harvesting of the Jhum is over.

On a selected day offerings to the deities are dedicated. Generally, the adoration of these deities usually follows some where around the month or Bhadra or Aswin on the occasion of newly rice-eating ceremony.
One of the most characteristic traits of Rupinis religion is the NAKRI puja festival. (79). This ritual is multipurpose in which offering to the nature deities are made. The symbolic representation of the Nakri puja is made according to traditional way. A bamboo pipe is posted on the ground and it bears decorations of shillfull hand around it, in which cotton is fastened along with black and white coloured cotton threads. Another shape of Nakri is to be found. A branch of tree locally called 'Dex ran' containing a two side branches is taken and two bundles of black and white coloured cotton are fastened on the two branches and the NAKRI is made.

The offering to the Nakri is made with the mantras, sacrifice of he-goat and fowls by the achai. After the pura is over, there starts a cultural function accompenied with folk-song,music and dance according to their own cultural tradition.

Beside, the KER PUJA, GARIA PUJA and the worship of ancestors are also arrenged by the Rupinis.

PUJAS AND FESTIVALS OF THE KALAIS:

The Kalais have their own system of pujas and festivals which are more or less similar to the Tipras, Kukis, Marchhum and Riangs. The Halams represent one of the most primitive peoples of Tripura. The kalai is a sub tribe of the Halam community. Their religion is in no respect, different from the Tipras and Riangs. It is evident that though they have entered into the faith of religion like Hinduism, but the main traits of animism like worship of nature, worship of ancestors etc, are there in their religious beliefs and rituals.
The deity of water as the supernatural force is commonly worshipped and supplicated for most of the worldly things.

The offering to Taibusuyamani is made in a ritual because she looks after the welfare of the Kalais so that they may be protected from the dangers caused by water. The ritual of the deity involves the sacrifice of a he-goat and undried rice and fruits to ensure her blessings. This puja is celebrated in the month of Bhadra or shravana every year. To perform this ritual the Achai constructs a symbolical representation of the deity with the green bamboo poles.

Among the Kalais there is profound belief in evil influence of the spirits. In every village of the Kalais there is special worship of the spirit called Nakri or lagri puja. The Achai is called for counsel and to perform a ritual in the name of a spirit so that the spirit with draws its evil influence and thus the villages save from evil eye of the spirit. A bamboo pole is planted in the ground, in front of which the offerings to the spirit are made in the evening. It is necessary that two fowls and a duck have to be sacrificed to this ritual.

The deity Sangrama has the power behind the birth of a child and he increases the wealth and prosperity of a Kalai family. The propitiation of Sangrama is made in a certain ritual which is called Mamita puja. It is held in a courtyard of a family. The ducks, he-goats, pigeon, fowls and pigs are sacrified and the Mantras are chanted by the Achai in the puja. The members of the family are compelled to offer sacrifice individually. If a family consists of three members, than five he-goats along with five fowls or pigeons should be sacrificed.(80). The ritual is held in day time when all members of the family are assembled in front of the symbol of the deity after taking a bath. During the ritual no one allowed to enter the courtyard or house of this family.

The ritual for appeasment of the deities Mailooma and Tuima is an important one among the Kalais which is generally observed in the month of Bhaddra-Ashwin on the occasion of Maikatal Chamani (newly rice-eating ceremony). Besides, this ritual is also held in the month of Agrayana after reaping the aman crops from the fields. The offering to Mailooma

stor worship, worship of nature deities and spirits. Before they were merged into the stream of Buddhism the countless deities of Hinduism held their sway over the Chakma mind, but later Advancing Buddhism had thrown many such deities off the pedestal. (8). At present, Siva, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Nabagrahas and others are adored.

The nature deities such as the sky, the celestial nature and the Earth are paid reverences at the time of beginning of all their rituals as CHU-NGU-LANG, PARAAMESWARI and Bajamonatti respectively.

CHU-NGU-LANG PUJAS:

The offering to Chungulang can be made at a time for getting a child, marriage, increasing harvest or for any social gain or growth. It has been found that the rites of this puja vary according to the character for which it is performed. The Ojha is informed by the house-holder in the previous evening to perform the puja. The next morning the priest generally appears to the household where the puja is being celebrated. He asks for a bamboo structure called Changari to be raised with seven parts of bamboo strips.(9). In addition to that two small baskets are placed near the changari-one containing rice and the other paddy. It has been found that the casks of wine are also served there. The Lorhi changing the mantras begins the puja and three pigs and a roster head, are boiled; laid up on banana leaves and kept in the Changari. The adoration of Parameswari is also performed during this time. The offerings of this ritual is similar to the Chungulang puja. The Chakmas imagine parameswari as mother earth being the wife of Chungulang.

VADYA PUJA:

The Vadya puja of the Chakmas is observed in which they serve rice to the souls of their ancestors. In every village dominated by the Chakmas, there occure the Vadya puja. Generally, the familly which takes initiative the Vadya puja counts the souls of its ancestors up to the third or fifth remove. On the selected day the new pyres are constructed for all the souls in presence of the Lorhi. (10). The offerings for each ancestor consist of a dish of rice and curry and also sweets. These offerings are prepared on a wide patch of earth in the danse jungle and the relations of the souls have to be remained present at the time of ceremony. The Lorhi Chants the mantras from the scriptures." During his recitation he coaxes the souls of fly back across the frontier of death to partake the food served out to them. The flies and insects which may settle on the food must be thought to be souls of the dead reborn in the shape of insects on account of divine retribution. In that case there is a prescribed redemptive rite to expiate the sins of the condemned souls."(11).

DHARMAKAM OR JADIPUJA:

From the religious point of view the Dharmakam puja or the Jadi puja is an extra-ordinary ritual the success of which totally depends upon a number of miracles. The lorhi performs the pujas out side the village generally in the dense part of the jungle because an uncanny sylvan semi-darkness and solitude are required for this ritual.(12). On the appointed day rice is cooked by a person who has to observe some rituqlistic in which the cook is not allowed to talk or the entrance of any one to this area is strictly prohibited. Then the cooked

rice is stuffed into a banana leaf packet and carried to the vanue of the puja. The other offerings of the Jadia puja consist of coconut, banana, suger cane and sweets." Stremers are improvised by tieing shred of cloths on bamboo spikes and put a loft. As the priest starts the puja by reading from the Dasaparami Tara, a faint streak of smoke will be seen rising from the capsule. The smoke significes that the God has been pleased and graciously accepted the reverence of his mortal devotees. Every one will then prostrate themselves in salutation to the invisible deity."(13). Like the other pujas, the Lorhi sacrifices fourteen roosters and a pig. After a few minutes incidentally a spider will appear from an unknown place and spin a web around the rice-filled capsule which indicates that the puja has been accepted by the deity.

THANMANA PUJA

One of the most Characteristic trait of Chakma religion is the observation of Thanmana puja or Ganga puja in the month of January. The nature deity of water has been indentified as Ganga who is similar to Tuima of the Kakbarak speaking tribes of Tripura. This ritual is to be held for aiding Jhum cultivation or increasing its yeild in which the educated elite and the Bikkus do not take active part. It is performed by raising subscriptions from all villagers. On the selected day, the puja is celebrated on a river by constructing symbolic representations of the deities. Two bamboo made padestals, one big and one small are made on keendeep water of river according to the rank and position of the deities. The bigger pole represents for the bigger deities like Garga, Biatra, Than, Chella, Bajammatti, Parameswari, Bhut, Rakhyoal and Thammang and the smaller one is

for the deities like Chekong, Maji, Shiji, baradhan, Kali jundur, Aancsha, Laojya, Thakur, Hatya who are supposed to be smaller.(14). The padestals are four-sided and raised on four main pillars of bamboo with a few supporting props. The tops of the pillers are over-hung with images of an ear of paddy and the other posts are spiked with images of cotton. At the middle of the padestal a cold of earth is kept which has to be collected from the Jhum cultivation. The clay lump is decorated with the ear of paddy, cotton and a few flowers. The priest chanting the mantras starts the ritual by sprinkling water on the padestal. As soon as chanting of the mantra is over, the deities have to be propitiated by sacrificing goats, pigs, roosters and pigeon etc. Traditionally, the neck of the animal has to be completely serverd in case of greater deities and generally, in case of lesser deities, the neck of the animal is half-cut. Then the priest sprinkles the blood over the alter and the ritual is rounded off with a big feast in which the whole village takes part.

BUR PARA PUJA:

The Burpara puja (15) is rendered to propitiate a natuure deity for the well being of the family. According to the prescription of Lorhi all the family members go to the river Ghat and wash their head for purification. The ingridients of the ritual consist of flowers, gold, silver and iron.

PUJAS ASSOCIATED WITH BIRTH:

The Ganga puja is performed for the welfare of the mother along with her baby who will born in future. (16). The puja of Bhut is also arranged in some villages.

Another important ritual is called the Barapara Puja which is celebrated for the safe delevary of the mother. For the welfare of the pregnant woman an uniquic puja is observed by the river side in which a hut is build. In front of the hut a pitcher with a betal-nut dipped in to it . (17). ' One end of a thread is tied round the neck of the pot and the other end is tacked to the door of the house. (18). Then the pot is brought in contact with the forehead of the woman-seven times. The woman along with the pot is then taken to the hut of the river side where certain prescribed rituals take place.
Back home, they keep the pot carefully and offer a feast by killing a pig. The feast is called 'Agida'. The KUJU-PANI Puja is connected with a new born baby. (19). One month after the birth of a child the Dhatri performs this ritual in which she takes the mother to the river-ghat for purification by holy water.

BIJHU FESTIVAL:

Visu or Bijhu is the most significant and holy festival in the religious point of view and it is stared in the last day of chaitra, continues for 3 days. It has been found that nobody of the Chakma community works for their bread on the occassion of Bijhu festival. (20). An important ritual called 'phool Bijhu' starts one day earlier than the (Mul Bijhu.' The last day of the festival is caled 'Gecha-Pacha.' The Chakmas collect the vegetables, leaves of trees and roots from the forest in the sacred day of phool Bijhu. Next day they rise early in the morning and after having bath from the river both the boys and girls come to the house to release the house-hold domestic animals from captivity and necessary foods are offered to the animals. The virtuous people gather round the temple and start to chanting the

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CHAPTER IV

BRAHMANICAL PUJAS AND RITUALS

The Tipras of Tripura are strong followers of Vaisnava Dharma and Sakta Dharma and they have simple devotion to Brahmanical Gods and Goddesses. In fact, though the centuries many of the Tipras have been drawn into a main strem of Brahmanical way of life along with its pantheon, It is historically believed that the religion and culture of the bengali speaking Hindus had come to enjoy an advantage and to live side by side with the indigenous culture of Tipra community resulting in cultural exchanges.(1). It was Hindu's sacred scriptures, their epics and puranic myths and legend and their social and religious system which modified the religious beliefs and practices of the Tipras. As a result, they began to engage the Brahman priest for the performance of Shastriya pujas on one hand and the Ochai on the other,- the later preserving the old Gods and rites; "these are the custadian of Tipras religion: a dual arrangement which is still vogue." (2).

The worship of house deity SRILAKSHMI has a great importance impect on the religious life of Tipras. During Lakshmi Purnima they worship the Goddess with image similar to other caste of Hindus.(3). The Worship of MAHADEVA is, however, most wide-spread among the men and women folks of Tipras. Some of them observe the holy night of SIVARATRI. The worship of Kali is no less popular. Besides, they worship the Goddess TRIPURASUNDARI, LAKSHMI NARAYAN, JAGANATHA, UMAMAHESWARA and so on. The Goddess of learning SARASWATI is paid honour by the Tipras at the time of Sri Panchami. The popularity of DURGA puja is most important in the life of Tipras in which,

they take part with great devotion. An earthen image of DURGA is propitiated by the Brahman priest according to Brahmanical scriptures. There are festivals where the Tipras participate together without making any hierarchical difference. They all enjoy togther HOLI, BIJOYADASHAMI, JANMMASTHAMI, DEWALI, RATHAJATRA etc. A large number of Tipras on many occassions have seen visiting the temples and accompaning religious functions.

The Jamatias have their tribal religion much modified by Brahmanism, It is Significant that majority of them are Hindus, but there are many pre-Hindu religious pujas and rites among the Jamatias. They are classified into two sects Vaisnavas and Saktas. They like to go on a pilgrimage every year and often visit secred places like Kashi and Brindaban etc. The Vaisnavism practiced and professed by the Jamatias, has certain conspicuous features quite distinct from those of the Vaisnavism as practiced in Assam. This may party due to the personality of Sri Chaitanya and his followers called Goswamins. In fact, under the proper guidance of the Goswamins they stated Hari Sankirtan and began to near 'Tulsi Mala' and Started to bear Tilaka of sandal -paste in white which represented their devotion to Vishnu.

The Saktas use a dot of sandal paste in red or vermillion as a symbol of Saktaism. It is evident that the pujas and religious rites of the Jamatias are performed by their traditional priest along with the Brahman priest.

SIVA, DURGA, KRISHNA, TRIPURASUNDARI and MAHAPRABHU are predominent devotional mainsprings of the Jamatia-mind, which is evident by their various religious worships. Durga is worshipped on the occassion of SHARADUTSAVA' in the month of Aswin. They observe the Durga

puja with the earthen image according to codified sacred texts. The Durga puja is performed by the Luku, moyol and Hoda level and also by certain individual house-holders.

The worship of SIVA in the name of TRINATH is also popular among the Jamatias once in a year in the month of Baisak-Jaistha. Trinath is a 'Loukik Devata' sanctioned by the prectices and conventions of the Bengalee Hindus; what is significant to note is that the Trinath Puja is accepted as a Laukik puja by Brahmanism, but no Brahman seems to perform this ritual. However, the ingredients which are related with the Trinath Puja are three earthen pots, three lamps, three bowls contained with hemp (Ganja) and seasonal fruits. (4). When every thing is in order, a person recites the glory of Trinath and, thus the Puja is rounded off.

The SARASWATI puja is celebrated in the month of Magh on the occasion of Sri Panchami Tithi. The Jamatia students worship the Goddess most ardently because She is supposed to give Bidya'. GANGA, LAKSHMI and SHANI are also worshipped by the Jamatias in order to achive their different needs in life. Besides these, fastivals constitute the most part of the religion of the Jamatias. Like the Pujas the festivals are the useful and prectical nature of the religion of Jamatia community. The festivals like MAKAR SANKRANTI, RATHAJATRA, DUL PURNIMA, JANMMASTHAMI, VIMEKADASHI, SHYAN EKADASHI and JHULAN PURNIMA are observed yearly.

SIVA and DURGA have been placed in the highest position because of their importance and popularrity in the life of Noatias.. The religious life of Noatias can not be thought with out the deity DURGA or KALI. Majority of the Noatias are Saktas. While a good number of the Noatias is found to lead a life of Vaisnava mendi-

cants. They believe that sacred duty is to set out on pilgrimage every year like caste Hindus to pay the homage to their beloved Gods and Goddesses. They adore KALI, LAKSHMI, VISHNU, SARASWATI and SHANI also according to the Brahmanical scriptures. The Brahman priests are appointed to perform the Sastriya pujas.

Generally, the Riangs are believers in the Sakta cult but at present some of them are followers of Vishnu and Christ. The worship of brahmanical deities like KALI, TRIPURASUNDARI, SIVA, LAKSHMI, MATANGI and DURGA are traceable among them. 'Once in a year from all over the district the Riangs assemble in one place to celebrate the worship of Tripurasundari or Lakshmi. '(6).

One can not conceive life of the Uchais in the village setting without performance of puja in some form or other. Majority of the Hindu Uchais are spent their life in performing pujas of the brahmanical Gods and goddesses like Lakshmi, Durga, Saraswati, and shani. Among the Hindu Uchais, a few Vaishnava are also traceable. The Buddhist Uchais pay homage to Lord Buddha according to Buddhist Scriptures. The Uchais observe the festivals which aim at establishing harmonious relationship between man and nature. The festivals which have inspired their souls through the ages are JANMMASTHAMI, RATHA YATRA and HOLI.

From the anthropological point of view majority of the Kalais are Hindus because they appoint the Brahman priest for the performence of their religious functions and it is also significant that the traditional Achais are also engaged for the performance of the nature -worships. Both the Vaishnava and Sakta sects may be found among them who go to the Tirthas with deep devotion. Now-a-days a section of Kalais has adopted Christianity.

However, the Lakshmi puja, TRINATH puja, SARA-

SWATI puja, and SHANI puja are most wide spreaded among the Kalais. (8). The Kalais celebrate DULPURNIMA Festival, RATHAYATRA festival and MAKARSANKRANTI FESTIVAL and so on.

A good number of Rupinis identify themselves as Hindus. Many of them are followers of Vishnu, While some have adopted Saktaism. The religious practices of the Rupinis are some sort of dualism in persuasions. They follow many of their traditional rites and rituals along with the religious practices acquired from HINDUISM or CHRISTIANITY. They worship MAHADEV, KALI, LAKSHMI, TRINATH, and some other Brahmanical deities. The Christian Kukis observe X-mas day festival, Easterday, Monday and so on. (10). Although the Chakmas are basically Buddhists, they bear a distinct Hindu influnce in their social norms. In their rites concering deities the chakmas bear marked traces of Hinduism. During the hey way of Hindu domonance vairous Hindu Gods and Goddesses held their sway over the Chakmas mind at one time. But later the advancing Buddhism had cut a good number of such deities from the religious life of Chakmas. The Gods and Goddesses who have inspired and animated their souls through ages are SIVA, DURGA, KALI LAKSHMI, SARASWATI and NABAGRAHA.'

There is category of pujas and festivals which are observed season wise. All most all the Buddhist pujas are fixed by local calendar. The Chakmas celebrate VISH or BIJHU festival, in which Lord Buddha is worshipped to achive their differnt needs of life. All the Full moons are identified very sacred to the Chakmas in which they offer ingredients to their beloved deity. (12). The CHAKRABUHA puja (13) is observed to the full moon of the month of Baishak, Asarh and Aswin.'

A circular enclosure is raised with hedges providing for only two accesses. There is a dais at the centre on which sits the priest. His devotes sit round him trimphantly

chanting the name of Lord Buddha.(14). 'In addition to that, a ceremonial ritual THAMING Tang is celebrated in which rice mixed with turmeric is heaped on a platter like a mountain. The other ingradients required for the Thaming tang are vermillion, sandal wood, betel-nut, papaye, cocunut etc. (15).

The Moghs have been given a religious importance to full moon. Generally, all their festivals are observed during full moon. The full moon in the month of Magh is called TABUNGLABRE when they pay homage to lord Buddha. In addition to this festival THINZIANA festival also is celebrated. SHANI, KALI and GANGA are also worshipped by the Maghs. (16).

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CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

It has been brought to light at the present stage of our knowledge that religions, no doubt, have a social dimension which prescribed for man's life and role in the society. The tribes of Tripura give preference to the nature deities, spirits, and ancestors to carry on struggle for existence. The tribal religion of Tripura is essentially polethoistic and is expressed in Pujas and festivals both at the family and communal levels. But Christians should not be included under this theory.

The tribal culture is related to religion. It is their music, dance, sculptures, crafts and literatures which found expression in religious rites and rituals. So, here in Tripura, the cultural identity and religious identity of the tribal people go together.

Pujas and festivals constitute the major part of the tribal religious life. Pujas are regulated ways of devotion shown to wards Gods and Goddesses, spirits and ancestors to satisfy their anger or to achieve metarial gain. The water of holy pipe, chanting of mantras in the indigenous language, sacrificial animal, wine and Ochai are the essential components of Puja. The Ochai performs the traditional puja according to his ancestral procedure. The aim behind majority of the puja is to avert an impending danger or calamity which might fall upon them or for food production or crops and also to achieve punya. Besides, some Pujas are arranged to drive out the evil spirits from a body of diseased person. The Ochai conducts puja as a Shaman to cure a patient from illness.

The tribal festivals of Tripura are celebrated in different seasons and characteristically these festivals are mostly agricultural, religious and marry -making. The festival of River bathing is performed for prosperity of crops,

good health of mankind and domestic animals.
A good number of festivals are accompanied with Pujas, prayers, music and dance at the time of celebration. The festivals of Goria Puja is remarkable for its folk songs and rhythemic dances. The Biju festival is also accompanied with songs and dances of the Chakma and Mogh communities.
The Govt. of Tripura has taken a policy of promotion of traditional culture, faith and practices because it has been found that the socio-religious cultural festivals accompanied with folk songs and dances increase the moral of the people, value of indigenous culture, self-respect for preservation of self identity by improving and developing folk songs and dances. On the occassion of the Republic Day, the marry-making festival is arranged through out Tripura when the cultural activities of the tribal people are displayed. At the lime light of these activities tribal people resolve to improve the celebration with incentive programme.
The religion of the tribal people of Tripura is, to some extent, an amalgamation of different religious beliefs and practices, such as animism, totemism, shamanism, magic, fertility cult, ancestor worship and Brahmanism or Buddhism etc. Majority of the tribal people have accepted the different sects of tthe Brahmanism which may be found in their religious practices. The involvement of tribal women in the various religious activities is, no doubt, important pointer of the Brahmanical influence, An example of LAKSHMI PUJA may be cited where the tribal women take active role and they perform the ritual themselves. Instead of engaging the Brahmin priest. Besides, the SHANI Puja, and SATYA-NARAYAN PUJA are also performed by the tribal people reciting the glory of the respective deities from PACHALI.
It is equelly interesting to note that the KHARCHI PUJA, GORIA PUJA, and the KER PUJA of the tribal people

have influenced the non-tribal people in developing their religious faiths and a large number of non-tribals are visiting the CHATURDASHA DEVATA temple and offering the ingredients to the deities.

Buddhist influence could be noticed in the Chakma's and Mogh's celebration of SIV Puja, KALI Puja, LAKSHMI Puja and NABAGRAHA Puja. They borrowed these Hindu Gods and Goddesses who were not akin to the Hindu deities and the mood of worship is completely different.

Festivals and Pujas, weather religious, social or seasonal, have played an important part in the life of the tribal people in Tripura.

The tribals of Tripura have given their religion a philosophy, an universal connotation in respect of the occultism. The religion in fact, is an order of their lives which prepares them for incessant struggle. The tribal religion along with PUJAS and FESTIVALS constitute the basis of development in the society. No culture can remain isolated and uneffected in the process of interaction with a big culture. Through the centuries many of the tribal people of Tripura rulers have been drawn into the main stream of Brahmanical culture and religion. The comming of the Buddhists have greatly changed the process of the tribal life in Tripua and now, the change is inevitable due to the spreading of Christianity.

In studying the Pujas and Festivals of the tribals of Tripura; it is felt that the Hindu tribals have changed and modified their primitive religion simultaneously and they are preserving old traditions and beliefs. This is also applicable for the Buddhist tribes.

The modernity should be accepted to bring social and economic changes, to preserve the beauty of the state, and to conserve the value of tribal life. The present school of modern religo-culture and culture is developing the traditional culture keeping affinity with old traditions of the people. Majority of the tribal people

are not drawn into the stream of western culture. Here in Tripura, Brahmanical and Buddhist rites and rituals will survive along with the old traditions because it appears that the present generation will preserve the ancestor's culture along with their modern tendency.

Inspite of imitating modern and western music, dance, Bombay movies, video tapes, etc. the tribal people of Tripura will not be compelled to give up old traditions because the younger generation are looking forward for better future accepting the moral values of their forefathers along with modernity.

The tribal culture of Tripura must find a new hope by criticising social reality showing the social backwardness and developing a form of culture, art, music and literature which will lead him to action for a change of its present world for a rich, colourful and the unworried future.

The wonder that is tribal culture of Tripura, accompanied with the Pujas and Festivals play an important role in the field of national integration and unity and will be continued to focus the light for the progressive development of the state.

APPENDIX -I

THE MANTRAS OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

The belief of the Supernatural deities has been compelled the tribal people of Tripura to create the mantras for the satisfaction of their desires. The mantras of the tribal communities may be devided into as follows:
I. The ritualistic mantras in times of Pujas and Prayers.

II. The mantras for the Shamanistic activities.
III. The mantras for the Occultism.

The mantras recited in the various activities of the tribal people of Tripura, have not found written in the releam of tribal world except the Chakma tribe. The Chakmas write their mantras in corrupt Burmese script as well as Bengali script for the purpose. The mantras are very eseential for the purpose of the black-magic, jugglery, worship of Gods and Goddesses, incantations and cure of deseases. A special kind of mantra is applied as a method of curing various deseases and also for transmission of deseases towards the end of the enemy. The tribal priest called Ochai learns the holy spell or mantras from his Guru. The mantras are transmitted orally from generation to generation, each generation changing them and adding to them with changing time, as such as eloquent priest enjoys libarty in making additions and alterations. So in the absence of a written code, the mantras vary according to the memory and individual faculty of speach of the Ochai. The post of Ochai is not hereditary and there is no priestly class or caste who performs the rituals of the tribals.

However, the mantras are kept well in the memory of the Ochai confidentially; the king, the dewllers of town and the non-tribals are not allowed to learn the mantras of the tribal communities. The priests strictly follow the

principle of secrecy of the holy mantras and it has been observed that the mantras are not loudly uttered. The ritualistic mantras are rythemic and sweet to hear.

The mantras are generally in form of verse consisting of several stanzas in the respective mother dilect of the communities in which the Ochai is belonged. Some times Malsum clan uses Tipra dialect instead of their mother tongue which apppears an exception.

In case of the Chakmas, the mantras are found written from the beginning of their script. The Ojha of the Chakmas is called Baidya who seems to utilise the mantras for the purpose of puja and the treatment of deseases as a Shaman. It appears that the mantras of the Chakmas are influenced by the Hinduism and Buddhism. The names of Hindu deities are Buddhhist deities traceable in the mantras of the Chakmas along with the indigenous deities. Besides, the neme of Badshaha Suleman is also found in the mantras of Chakmas. It is a fact that some mystic words are added with the mantras, the meaning of which are not clear to any body.

TIPRAS

During the puja of the Gods called AKHATA and BIKHATA (some time called Ikhitra and Bikhitra) the Ochai spells the mantras in the dialect of the Tipras. The Ochai utters the following words according to the choice of the house -holder as follows:

'HANGNAI DANGANAI CHIRI ADUNG BALAS AKHATA BIKHATA TUITTUIBU KOLAKSHI RAJA DUNG BALAE NASU NASU HAMAYAHAI TANGNAI TUIBAK LAKTAI AIUGA LAGAY, TANGNANI HELANNI AIUGO ONANAY TANG THUN DANGNAY.'

Significance:

Let the couple so and so be laborious and happy in their married life by the blessing of AKHATA and BIKHATA and KOLAKSHI RAJA. Let their life be as long as river and unaffected like and undecaying stone.
OR
'ANHA SHRI IKHITRA BIKHITRA RAJA, TAIBUK KOLAKSHI RAJA, DANG BALI NASU NASU HAMA-YA HAI TANGNAL TAIBUK LOGTUI AYUGO LA-KGAY TANGNANI, LALANGNI AYUK NAGAY TANG THUN.... DAKSAI."

Significance:

Ikhitra, Bikhitra and Kolakshi Raja - Let his life be as long as river, as long as the stone..... aman.
According to the comment of Sri Alindra lal Tripura, this type of santence may be compared to the Brahmanic 'SANGKALPA BYAKYA'for the invitation of the nature-deities. The opinion of Sri Tripura is that such type of invitation may not be considered as the so called mantras.
'OKAPUMA HRENG PATHEIN MAMAN DAMRE DESHI HAIRSE DAMRONG ONGRENG DAMRE-CHE'
OKAPUMA RENG DAMRESU DESEA HAICHHE RAJA HAIRCHHE RAJA
HAIRCHHE DAMRESU PATHEIN MAIMAN'

Significance:

O my King and the God of king, do good to human, country, kingdom and our community, let the life of king be unaffected by death.

REANGS

It is a fact that the ritualistic activities of the Reangs bear close resemblance to those of the Tipras. Gods and Goddesses of the Reangs, Noatias, Jamatias and Puran Tipras are similar to each others. But, a kind of diferences may be observe in case of pronountiation of the words in the name of the deities and the arrangement of a small high-rimmed wicker-tray containing offerings to the deities. It has been noticed that the mentras or spells of the Reangs are similar to the Tipras except the pronountiation of the words used in the mantras.

Devotional welcome with offerings:

ACHUK FAIDI BACHA PHAIDI
MWKHANG TA KHEDI, KHORANG TA KHEDI
ACHUK PHAIDI BACHA PHAIDI
YAKSUDI YAKONG SUDI
RANDCHAK-NI KHAMPLAI -O ACHUKDI
RANG CHAK-NI KHURIO, PUPHAI -NI BATI-O CHADI

Significance:

Please come and sit, do not cast any look to this side, stand up, do not utter indecent words, and take your food placed on the golden and silver cups.

Confermation of Arrival:

BAMOINHA-LE, GANJOKHA-LE
TOKTWI SEMA NAI-O

OKCHAI HA-LE KHAMA HA-LE
KOMOLA HA-LE KOMOTHA HA-LE
PER SEMA NAI-O TOR SEMA NAI-O.

Significance:

Brahmins and Pandits consult almanac and other scred books and selected-holy days to adore you, we are iliterate people, we can not read and write; so from an observation of the dropping of a pair of leaves we come to know whether you have come or not.

Request and Prayer:

'AMA MAINOKMA NASU.... FANG
HAMYA TONG BA CHAIA TONG BA
MAISING KONGRAI VASA MUSA
BUKHRI KHUIDI SIKHRI KHUDI.'

Significance:

O Mother Mainokma, the house holder Mr. so and so has been suffering from caugh and cold in the winter and from the eye disease in the rainy season - remove all these, he prays for your blessings.-

'NOUSA FALNA-O TOUMANI BAGOUI
BUMUGN KHURFAI BOUSAK KHURFAI
CHHILI KHAI0FAI BILI DHAI-FAI'

Significance:

The name of your son is Mr. so and so, why you have created a disease in his body?

'NOUSA FALNA YAK-NI DA FALOUI
CHANG-NI RIFALOUI CHAMA ROU-O
NUNGMA ROU-O, RANGCHAK BATI RUFAI BATI

YACHAK CHADI HKUK CHAK CHADI
YAK SUDI KHUK SUDI. '

Significance:

Your son Mr. so and so having disposed the chopper of his hand, clothes of his waist, has collected all necessary articles of offerings for you. Please take the food placed on the golden cup and silver cup.

'ASUK HIN KHOULAI-BINI HAMAYA TANGMANI
CHAYA TANCMANI MOUKIE TANGMANI
KUNGLE TANGMANI, KULOM TANGMANI
KOUSA TANG MANI, HANI KANA-O
TAI-NI BUSUB-O, TAIBUK KOUSATAI
TAIKHA KOUSA-TAI SRUNG SRUNG PRUNG PRUNG
SUOI TLANGDI ROGOY TLANGDI BALLAI, DA-KSAI. '

Significance:

You wipe all of his misfortunes and while returning carry all contretemps.

Apology to sacrificial animal:

ANU POKHI RAJA
SUBROY CHANG OUICHHE BARUYA CHANG OUICHHE.

NOJMA KOUCHAMUNG NOUFA
KOUCHA MUNG HORO OUNG
OUT HORO-HA TANJAKGO
BAL OUNG-OI SALOK
RAJAGO OCHAI PAPO
KRWI BARUA PAPO
KRWININI NA MOUI-HO
KHITUNG KHA TLANODI bALLAI.

Significance:

O bird, your mother and father have been accepted the sacrificial rulling of Subroy Raja from generation to generation. You may be salughter any time of a day and night. The ochai and his assistant Baruya can not do any inauspicious act. Your tail is tied with sin, while returning carry all sins; I am not responsible for this.

AH BAGBOL RAJA
MOONGMA KWCHCHA MANGMO
NOONPHA KWCHCHA NANGMO
NOONG-NO TAIN NAI
ABONI ANG DAYA KRWI
ANGLS SUSAO SAIMAIN YA
ANGLE YA OHA-O MAIN-YA.'

Significance:

O He-goat, you will be satisfied to day. Your mother and father promised for this. I have no responsibility; my assistants are not responsible also. Do not curse us.

Offering of blood and meat

PHOIN HA KLAI BO ATU PUNG NAI
THO KA KLAI BO KHURI PUNG NAI
YACHAK CHADI KHUK CHAK CHADI.'

Significance:

A single piece of meat is sufficient for the fullness of a pin of bamboo to hold meat spices together, and only a single drop of blood is required to fill completely the vessel. You gladly take food and drink with the help of your hand and mouth.

Seeking of Blessing:

'NOONG CHAMUNG MAIN-DE
NUNG NUNG MAIN-DW
NOOSA POLNA HAMYA CHAYA
CHIKLAI KHUIDI MAKHLAI HKUIDI.'

Significance:

You are entertained with foods and drinks. The disease of your son Mr. so and so is to be washed down away by you.

Final request and good byè

CHÀ PHIO HA NUNG PHI HA
NOOSA FOLNA -NO BAKYA CHAPHI -HA
NINI HABI HA-O NOKHA HA-O
DASA DONDO TUIN-NANG THANG-DI
MIKHLAI THANG-DI BAKHLAI THANG-DI
ARO, TA TONG DI. '

Significance:

You have entertained. You have blessed Mr. so and so. Now you go back to your residence (land of Gods). Do not stay here, while returning carry all misfortunes. Generally, the invitation, prayer, and good bye etc. are called 'KUBENG-O' by the Reangs and other communities. This type of 'KUBENG-O' is utilised in every worship of the God or Goddess of the tribal people. Some mystic word or words are included in the 'KU-BENG-O' such as, AIMRA, AI, BOIMRA, BOYO-,OM, SWA-HA ect. The mantras of the occultism are very important, in which the words of Maghs, Tipra, and Bangalee are included along with some mysterious word or words like, OM, HRING, HUM, HRO and LING.

CHAKMAS:

There are various kind of mantras recited in the shamanistic purpose. Some mantras are also applies against the enemies and to ward off the evil eye and cure the patient from sufferings. The Chakmas make use of river water during the purification ceremony of any individual when the Ojha spells the mantras in the dilect of the Chakmas as follows:

BUR PARA MANDAR

Dere ganga dere pani
Abuj manei suddha gari
Suddha gari padhang ghar
Mar nang debir put Shibsankar.
Juro chhara jure pani
Dere ganga dere pani
Surang garang urang mani
Sujang nale varang pani
Dere ganga dere pani
Abuj manei suddha gari
Suddha gari padhang ghar
Mar nang debir put Shibsankar.
Shil bhangi pather garang
Pather bhangi darga garang.

Significance:

O mother Ganga, the son of Goddess, Shibsankar prays to you for water so that he may purify the silly human beings. The water of the rivulet is cold. O mother, I shall draw water from the flowing brook; please allow me to send them to their houses after purification. I am the son of Goddess, my name is Shibsankar; I pray to you for the grant of my solicitation.

PHUL PARA

Ung uttarettun anilung phul
Nange niranjan,

Gorakhanahte dila phul
Garlung jattan.
Dela tare
Nadele mare,
Satgang sajuri
(Falner) dwi- charanat parhe.
Ung swaha pua.

Significance:

The flower brought forth from the north is called Niranjan(pure). This flower has been obtained from Gorakh Nath. It has been kept carefully. One gets life at the sight of it, if not death is inevitable. Let the person be hyptonised and bend down to the lady- love . I transmit this hyptonised words for the purpose.

PURIFICATION MANTRA

Shil bhangi pather garang
pather bhangi darja garang
Durja pani huje tulang
Sajang nale bharang pani
Abuj manei suddha garang
Shuddha gari padhang ghar
Mare nang Debir put Shibasankar.

Significance:

I shall create a sea by crushing the stones. I shall turn all habitations into a watery surface. I shall draw water from the flowing brook. I shall purify the silly human beings and send them to their respective houses. O mother, I pray to you for the grant of my prayer.

JWRAR PANI PARA

Ung- utha larang mu larang
Bayu garang thir
Phalner ulmatya mana
Gange garng.
Jwilba tanse thidhi garang
Ganga Bhagirathi
Thengtale thidhi garang
Mada bajunmati.
Nabhimule thidhi garang
Burma ujal ghar
Nasikate thidhi garang
Paban dui shar.
Chaksu madhue thidhi garang
Dui kalachan
Karnamule thidhi garang
Chaitanya Gojen.
Malumette-thidhi garang
Ekachakra ghila
Dui haste thidhi garang
Engila pingila.
Dui pade thidhi garang
Susarmma Gandhari
Dhari aaghe Mahaprabhu
Ei chare nari.
Kaya charma dhari aaghe
Bishnu Niranjan
Rakta Mangsa dhari aaghe
Deva Birochan.

Ketu- Durga dhari aaghe
Shakti tribhuvan
Bhenu bhenu badya baje
Nikunga bhavan.
Ungkar susari Ganga
Ungkar suya!
Ungkar bhagirathi Ganga
Ungkar suya!
Ungkar airabati Ganga
Ungkar suya!
Ungkar Jannhabi Ganga
Ungkar suya!
Ungkar shiba jal Ganga
Ungkar suya!
Man hok thir tan hok thir
Ungkar suya!

Significance:

A Considerable quantity of water is sanctified by means of Uttering the prescribed mystic words cited abive for the removal of fever.

PHUL PARA (EX GARANI)

Ung phul aasan phul bajan
phuler jay jagar,
Ei phul paridyanagar
Phalni na lang ghar duyer
Khuwai aanang-ben duyer
Ben duyorata dile bari
Satgang sajuri
Phalni e Yek mar charanta pari.

Significance:

The mystic mantra cited above is uttered by the chankma Ojha on a flower aimfully for the purpose of hypnotization of any body as requested by some one from his community.

MAD PARA

Ung shibeng pudi kajal pudi
Sat- phudure ma
Ki puge chara kafe
Aandhar ratri ga
Mari ja phuddye
Mari ja.

Significance:

An quantity of wine is sanctified by means of this mantra for the purpose of destroyingg the insects from the plants.

BIJH JHARA

Ung ore ore padma
Mahadever jhi
Deb nange kam
Garar bana ki?
Sumeru rupasi padma
Kam nei ghuraghuri
Karma dila dwani aar
Muri dilung bhat bari.
Mahadebe dila bar
Padmaya gare ra
Phalner kalkuti
Nimijat kadi jha.

Significance:

This mystic mantra is applied by the Chakma Ojhas to cure a person from snake-biting.

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Reangs	Tripuries
Buru (Man)	Borok(Man)
Mainokma (Goddess)	Mailungma (Goddess)

Therer are six vowels in KOKBOROK. Now we chose as below to express in written form:
O-অ, A- ো, I- ি, U-ু, E- ে, W- ৌ I shall follow this method of spelling for expressing KOKBOROK words.

APPENDIX -II

RELIGIOUS SONGS OF THE TRIBAL PUJAS AND FESTIVALS

Tripuries
GARIA RWMANI OR MWTAI RWMANI

OCHAINI HIK: KASAI LUBIA DONG
THENGUI CHHAK-YA DONG
AISRI-SRI NOG-O KA-PHAI BA
CHHAMUNG HOMUNG DE TONG
NOK PHANG : WANDAL ENGSA-NI SUMUI
NOKHA TOLANI CHUMUI
KHWNA PHUNG AI OI MWTAI RWNANI
OCHAI WNG PHAI-DI KUMUI.
BARI MAGDAM CHA-NAI BA TOKHA
NAITOK BOKJAKNAI BAKA
KHWNA PHUNG AI-OI MWTAI RWNANI
BARUA WNG PHAI-DI KAKA.
GAIRENG THOKOMA
MAKHU-MAI BUBUK
BABUI RAICHUIMA RAIBUK
KUMUI KOTOR BO,OCHAI ONGKHWLAI
JOGALYA PHAIDI-BAI-BO.

Significance:

The wife of Ochai addressing the house holder enquires the reason of this arrival in the house of the Ochai early in the morning. The house holder replies that he has come to invite the Ochai to perform the Garia puja in his house. The house holder invites the assitant of the

Ochai to act as Barua. He invites the wife of Ochai to work as a Jogali.

GARIA MWTAI PHAI-O
CHAITRA THANGKHO LAI
BAISAK PHAIANO
BAISAK MAI KAILAI-NANI
SENA KWCHAR BAI BAISAK KWCHAR-O
MAIBA CHUNG BAROK NANI.

Significance:

Garia has arrived. The month of Baishak will appear after the month of Chaitra. We shall sow the seed jointly in the month of Baishak.

GOM GOM GOM GARIA
MWCHHA PHAI DIBA BARIYA
CHHENG KWRWNG MWSA OY PHAI-KHA DO
BARIYA KHARKHW-NA DO
TAI CHAPAK CHAPAK TOG CHADI
TAI-NI SIKAMBUK KHCHADI
KOLOK TA HINDI KITING TA HINDI PHAI-OY
AY KHERENG BAI AY
TAMO HINAI PHAIYA
CHANA HINOY BO PHAIYA
NUNG NA HINOY BO PHAIA
BABUI GAREYA PHIYO
ATKA HAKOR LUPE
ATKA HAKOOR LUPE
NAI BA KAMINI SIKLA ROKONI
ABUK CHHE LUPE LUPE.

Significance:

The youths are requesting the villagers to take part in the dance which is called " Kherengbai". In response to the question of the villagers the Garia dancers reply that they have not come to take and eat anything from the village, but they are looking the brests of village girls which are ready for flying.

KOLOIS

Garia Rwnai Rwchabmung
O MAYI,CHITRO THANGKA BA, BAISAKH PHAI-DEKHA
BCHHOR SON PHIROK PHAIKA.
O KHONJON THANGKHA BA TELIA PHAIKA
BOCHHOR SON PHIRAO PHAIKA
O MAI YAKNI CHHI DA CHHORA
TOKCHING KORONG BAI THANGGOY CHANANI NANG NAI
O MAI TINILE SALCHHA CHHI
RONGO TAMOSA KHLALE MAICHU CHUSA.

Significance:

Addressing the God Garia the youths are singing that at the end of the year the Khanjan bird goes away and the tiliya birds come, similarly the month of Baisakh will come after Chaitra. Likewise another year come after a year. Today is a very good day. The joy is for everybody for today only. Tomoroow, we are to go the Jhum field with a boundle of rice. Today will be lost

on tomorrow. This means sorrow and happy revolves like a wheel.

" O SAL BO THANG RW RWK
MOKAL KAI RW RWK
TINI TON GWLAK NA DU,
O GOLQJONG TAN PHAI OY
JAKHWRAI BODI,
MAMA JAK TOLOY TWIDI
JAN KOLI SON."

Significance:

The day is passing slowly. The night comes after the day. Garia is also sleeping.Garia is prepared for departure. Farewel of Garia will be performed after the cutting of galjung trees and building a bridge. O my companions today Garia will be immersed.

" AILAMRE AILAMRE
GARIA RAJA DESH BERAI
GHAR GRIHASTHI HOJAK KORO
DESHE DESHE BOITE CHAI
TILA TONGKOR BHANIYA
SAT CHHORA SUKAIYA
DHOL BAJAILO UJIR NAM
KHORGO HOICHHE BANAIYA
GARIA AICHHE BANAIYA
GARIA RAJA CHINTA NAI.
• • • • • • • • •

BHALORE BHALORE BHALO
THENG TULIYA NACHO.
• • • • • • • • •

MA CHAIYA PHAI MAIYA

MA NUIYA PHAI MAIYA
GAROYANI PHAI MICHHE -
GARIYANI CHHOKARAK RAG.
HATA MUIYA CHA HAMIYA
GARIA BAI TANG HAMIYA.
• • • • • • • •

OI GARIA OI
OI GARIA OI
CHINI PARANI SIKLAROG
SITOTTOI LOPE PEI
ATUKA BOHKORO LOPE
ATUKA BOKHORO LOPE
CHINI PARANI SIKLAROGOIE
SITATTOI PEI.

Significance:

The youths are addressing the house holder to sing the song after their arrival in front of the house and they request the house-holder to take necessary arrangement for the satisfiction of the Garia. It may be noted the erotic element seem to be found in the above mentioned song.

O JALAY SAO CHADI
KHERI BACHA THUN
O KANGAL MUI KUTHUNG MAN THUN
THORAI BACHA THUN
O KANGAL MUI KHUTHUNG THUN.

Significance:

Here the singer is singing that the low land is utilised for the cultivation of Jhum. If the Jhum-field is brunt,

the Kheri plants will grow quickly to provide the vegitables for the moneyless begger.

RIANGS

Song of Garia

AISO GU GARIA AISO GU GARIA
KUMAR DHUTI CHHAP KORO
MATHER PAGRI CHHAP KORO
JHAMA JHUMA CHHAP KORO.

• • • • • • • • •

GARIA RAJA BERAITE CHAY
UTHORE GARIA
DESH DESH BERAITE CHAY
DESH DESH NACHTE CHAY
CHAIT PORAB SHUNIYA
BARI BARI BERATE CHAY
TILA-TANGKOR BHANGIYA
SAT CHHORA SUKHAIYA

• • •

DHUL BAJAILA UJIR NAM
KHORGO HAICHHE BANAIYA
GARIA AICHHE BANAIYA
GARIA RAJA CHINTA NAI.
TAR BANAICHHE CHHIRANG GHOTI
CHHIRONG GHOTI HATE LAIYA
HATIR DATER GANTHIYA
DAKER DAKER SHARIYA
BARI BARI NACHTE CHAY
KHALA THOLA CHHAP KORO

Significance:

Addressing God Garia it is sung that the God Garja wants to tour from place to place. He also likes to dance from door to door crossing the hilly regions. The God Garia wishes to sit on the courtyard of the house holder.

DIN RAT CHALIYA
JOL GHOTI ANOSNA
GARIA RAJA BOITA CHAY
DUYAR MELIYA TAMASA CHAY
MANILE BOITA CHAY
NA MANILE CHOLTE CHAY
AISO GU KHERANGBAI
DIM PILE GARJA DE
MUROG PAILE GARIA DE
SUNARUPA BAR BHARIYA
TAKA POISA BANDHIYA
GARIA RAJA ASON BADE BAITE CHAY
CHATI BADE BAITE CHAY

Significance:

Addressing the house-holder the youths sing that Garia Raja wants to sit if the house holder respects him. The house holder may offer the eggs and fowls to Garia for receiving blessings from him.

CHAKMAS

Songs of Biju
1. BIJU DINNUY LUNGOGI
UDI UDI BEDEBANG
GEI GEI GEI DEI BONLAK NAKSFULAN PARIYE
O FUL BIJU DIN JARATA GEBANG
FUL TULIBANG AJAL AJUL NASKTULI TARUMAT

Significance:

Biju has come, so we should enjoy it in flying mood. Brother and sister, let us go to pluck the Nageswar flowers from the deep forest with cupped palms.

Buddha Tabana

(Religious Song)

2.NAMU BUDDHA ARANAT
NAMU DHARMA ARANAT
NAMU SANGHA ARANAT
EI TIN NANGE BHAJANA SAMANE
EI MANEI JANAMAT.
KADHAK PAP GARILUNG JANI NA JANI
KADHK DHAB SIRELUNG TARE NA MANI
SEI PAP THEBA JAMA
YANI NAPELUNG KHEMA
EI JIBANAT
LOBHE PAP PAPE KHSY
AI KADHA MUA NAY
ABUJ MANHEI AMI NA BUJI
SEI KARMABHALE MOR
YUGE YUGE JANAMHOR
ANADARE YARE NA PUJI.
MUKTI PEBATYEI MUI BARE BAR
JANMA MRITYU DUKHA CHELUNG AREBAR
DHARMAPATH DHARINEI KARMA KARMA SHECH GARINEI
YEDUNG NARBANATA.

Significance:

I remember the Lord Buddha, Dharma and Sanga. The life long duty of the human being is to adore them. Knowingly or unknowingly I have committed sins and fulfilled many desires rejecting you,Please forgive me and rescue from sins. A temptation creates sin and a sin causes destruction ; but the ignorant man can not realise this truth. A man comes in the world again and again, the cause of which is that he denies to adore you. For the attainment of salvation I want to go beyond the sorrows and pleasures. I like to achieve Nirvana following the Dharma path resignating all services of wordly life.

3. ECHYA AMAR BIJU DIN, ACHYA AMAR BIJU
MILA MARAD BAGHE MILI
BIJU DINAT NAJIBONG
BENYA POTYA UDINEI
NUYOU NUYOU SAJ PINIBONG
ADAME ADAME BEDABONG
SANG-SAMCHYA BADINEI
GHARE GHARE MAD-JAGARA
BEGE MALI KHEBANGE
MILI MARAD SABHA BADI
GHILA KHARA KHABONGE.
GHARE GHARE BERENEI
BURO-BURI GADHEBONG
JAGE JAGE SMAR BADI
GIDE RENGE BERABONG.

Significance:

Today, all the men and women shall take part in the

dance of Biju festival. Rising early in the morning from the bed and wearing new dresses we shall go round the village and dance. All men and women shall play Ghila together. We shall drink wine and Jagara. We shall walk from door to door to bathe the aged men and women. We shall go round the village singing the melodious song to express our joy.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:.

1. Garia, Directorate of Tribal Research,Tripura.
2. Riangs, The Department of Education, Tripura.
3.Bhattacharjee,·P.N.Lokabritter Aloke koloi Sampraday, 1983.
4. Two songs of Chakmas on the occasion of Biju Festival have been supplied by Sri Niranjan Chakma.
5. Sri Alindra Lal Tripura has gone through the whole songs presented in this APPX-II which have been modified by him as an expert on the line of the Tribal culture of Tripura.

APPENDIX III

HALAMS AND SUB-TRIBES OF HALAM, NAMELYM MALSUM, RANGKHAL, BANCHER, KARBONG, RANGLONG, NATILANGLONG, NASBANG, CHHAGSHEP, THANGACHEP, SAIMAL, NASIN, DAB, LONGKAI, KHULONG, KALAI, RUPINI, AND KAIPENG.

Pujas and Festivals

Full information about the Sub-tribe of Halams, namely Malsum, Rangkhal and Bangser has not been collected; as such, it is subject to further monograph on each of them. Here, a study of the Pujas and a festivals of the halams community has been attempted to present the religious life of them.I have no doubt in my kind that this general study of the religious culture of the halams community will provide the nature and character of the Pujas and Festivals of the Rangkhal, Banser and Malsum including all other sub-tribes of the Halams.

The Halam religion is saturated with all primitive beliefs and practices their religion is, in no respect different from those of the other ancient tribes. The Halam community has been influenced by the Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism, but the majority peoples of the community have not yet been forgotten their primitive religion. The following table shows the religious distribution off the halams.

Religion	1901	1911	1961	1971
Budhist	-	-	-1	-26
Christian	-	-	-253	-520
Hindu	2215	5611	16,044	18,530

The Halams are polytheists and ancient religion with its magic, fetism, totemism, shamanism, animism, animatism, fertility cult, and withch-craft has been practiced by the hindu Halams even today. In the Halam society there is a hierchy of deities and spirits who role over them as the forces of nature which pervadethe religious thought. The supernatural powers cast an influence over the Halams, therefore, these forces have to be appeased in various ways at different times so that they bless the Halams with happiness and peace. The halams are culturally nearer to the Tipreas and Reangs. Some of their deities may be identified with the Brahmahnical deities. Adoption of Brahmannical religious beliefs and practices along with the primitive rites and rituals seem to be brought about gradual midification of their religious behaviour.

The halams have their own system of Pujas conducted by the priest called Achai. It has been observed that a marriage ceromony has to be performed by the worship of two benevolent deities called ARTHUKNAI. The names of two deities appear ot be veried from sub-tribe to sub-tirbe of the Halam commnunity. After adoring the Gods, The achai advices the groom and the bride to live in peacs and love, and to have a long conjugal life.

To ensure the birth of a promising baby and to save the mother life, three pujas are performed:

1. SAKPALANG ROBLANG
2. TOOI ÀRTHA
3. ARU RUSUBANG

First Puja starts during pregnancy, then on the eve of delivery and third, after delivery.

Besides, The SAAR THADA puja is basically the puja of the Jhumia halams and it is generally arranged for an increase in crops. On any wednesday or thursday, the offering with invokations and sacrifices of chikens and pig are made in the granary.

In this connection it may be added that ARTHUKNAI-,the benevolent deities counteract the evil spirits and cast their own good influence over the halams. These two deities may be identified with LAMPRA (AKHA-TRA, BIKHITRA) who have to be appeased on every social and religious occasion. TOOIMA, the Goddess of water is not the supreme goddess, but she gives bumper crops, peace and prosperity. She is given the offfering of a he-goat to appease her as the deity of river who has been identified with the Brahmanical goddess Ganga.

There are two Goddesses or nature - deities; the goddess of rice is called SERRING ARTHA and SUKUMPHAI, the goddess of cotton. Each of these goddesses has to be propitiated after the harvesting of the jhum is over. On a selected day of the ritual of these deities the offering is made so that the deities may bless them along with crops. The adoration for these deities usually follows somewhere around the month of Bhadra or Aswin on the occasion of newly rice-cutting ceremory. According to the belief of the Halams or Sub-tribes of the Halam community, all forests supposed to be controlled and guided by a malevolent spirit known as PAOENGPHA. He casts evil influence over the children , as results, they suffer from severe pain or fever. PAIENGPHA is thus worshipped in the forest with a view to keep the agriculture and to cure a patient from his illness. Usually, a ritual is performed in which two black fowls or a pig of any size are sacrificed.

The nature -deity HACHUNGMA casts a supreme influence over the forests, causes desease in animals and hides domestic animals and children. She is malignent deity and she hasshared equal power and status of PAOENGPMA in some cases. Whenever it is found that HACHUNGMA is causing trouble to the house holder, the ochai is engaged to conduct a ritual to withdraw her evil influence. The fowls are sacrificed

along with wine, the ritual is performed in the JUNGIES. One of the most characteristic traits of the Halam's life is the performace of the BORC PUJA which is held only once in four or five years. Perhaps this ritual is multipurpose in which the offering to the river Goddesses (RIMA AND SARMA) is made. The whole halam community has to be assembled together to observe this ritual. Before performing this ritual, a hand some subscription is raised by the halam community. A good number of goats, ducks, fowls, pigs and bisons are sacrificed and after the puja is over, of cource, planty of liquor to wash the heavy lunch on down. During this festival they sit together to settle all internal disputes, try cases of crime and inflict punishment on the offenders which makes the puja a useful social gathering in keeping peace and harmony within the community.
If is a out line of the pujas and festivals of the Halams in the world of their traditional primitive religion and the Rangkhal, Banser, and Malsum are also following the same who belongs to Himduism subject to change the names of the deities according to their mother dilect only,.

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